# SIR DANIEL WILSON

H. H. LANGTON

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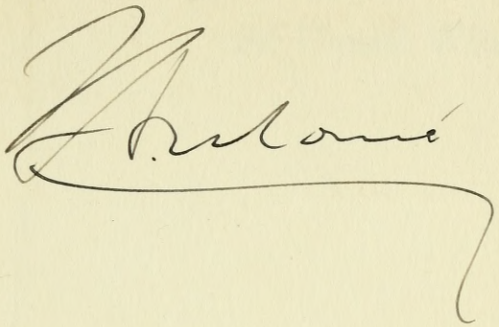

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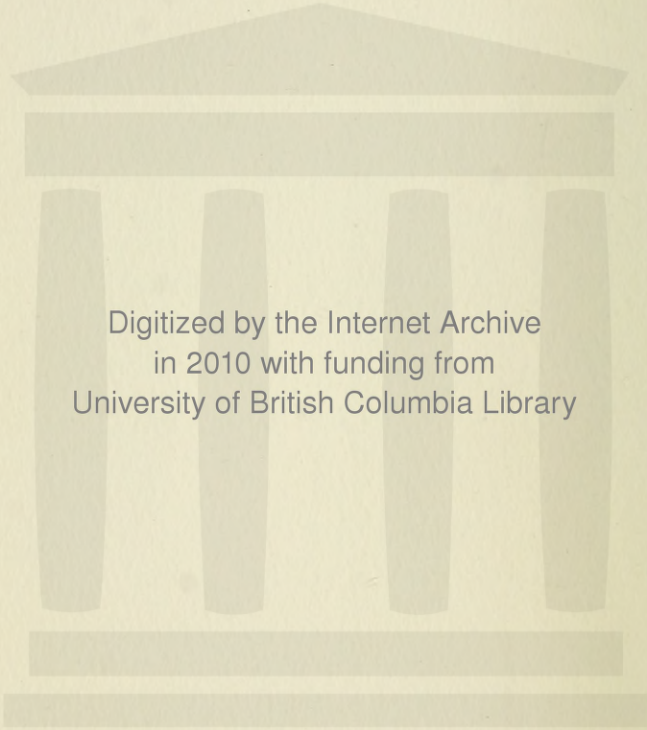
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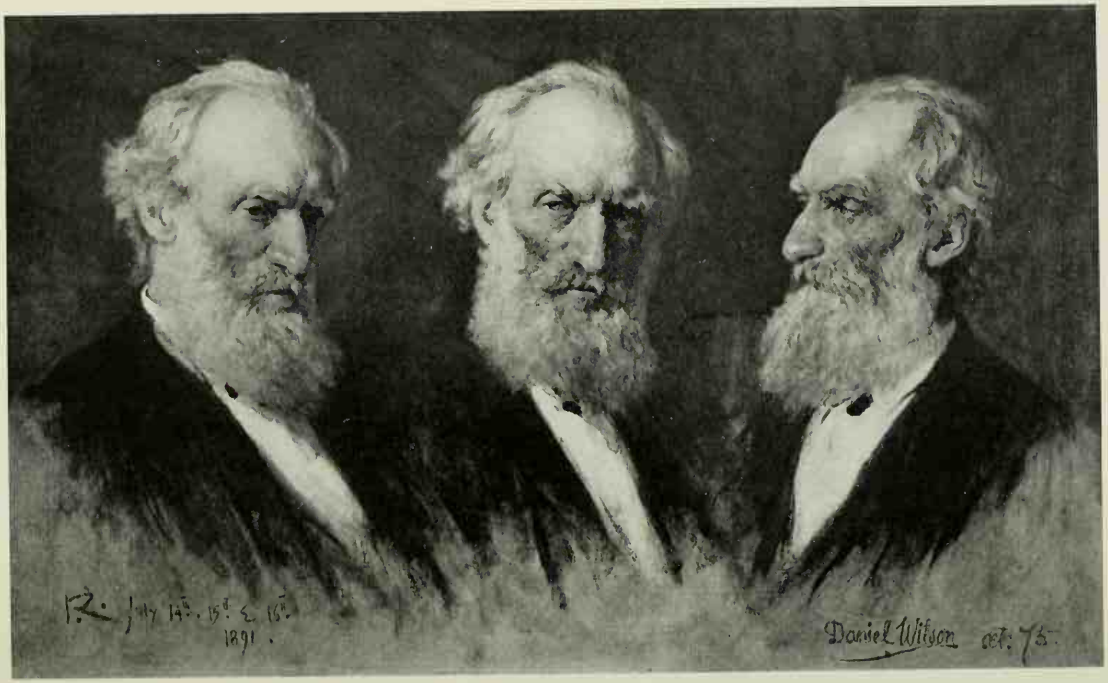


Sir Daniel Wilson, *ætat.* 75

*(From the portrait by Sir George Reid)*

# Sir Daniel Wilson

## A Memoir

By H. H. Langton

1929

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| List of Illustrations | 7 |
| Prefatory Note | 9 |
| Chap. I. Early Life | 11 |
| Chap. II. Removal to Toronto | 50 |
| Chap. III. Professor in University College | 69 |
| Chap. IV. President of University College | 104 |
| Chap. V. University Federation | 118 |
| Chap. VI. President of the University of Toronto | 152 |
| Chap. VII. Miscellaneous Activities | 184 |
| Chap. VIII. The Last Year | 213 |
| Index of Names | 237 |

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

Turner's Ancient Carthage, the Embarkation of Regulus (from the engraving of the picture executed by Daniel Wilson in 1841) . . . . . 32

Bake House Close, Edinburgh (from a pencil sketch by Daniel Wilson dated May, 1844) . . . 48

Daniel Wilson with his younger daughter, *circa* 1854 (from a daguerrotype) . . . . . 64

Blockhouse, Yorkville, taken down in 1865 (from a water-colour sketch by Daniel Wilson) . . 80

Nipigon River from the first rapid (from a water-colour sketch by Daniel Wilson) . . . . . 96

Osceola House, Waterville, New Hampshire (from a water-colour sketch by Daniel Wilson dated August 24, 1886) . . . . . 112

University College, Toronto, after the fire of February 14, 1890 (from a photograph) . . . . 176

Sir Daniel Wilson, *aetat.* 75 (from the portrait by Sir George Reid, P.R.S.A., painted in 1891) *Frontispiece*

# PREFATORY NOTE

The illustrations in this volume have been selected to exemplify Wilson's artistic power at different periods of his life. The Board of Governors of the University of Toronto have kindly given permission to reproduce the engraving of Turner's picture and the sketches of Bake House Close, the Yorkville Blockhouse, and the Nipigon River, as well as the triple portrait of Wilson by Sir George Reid, all of which are the property of the University. The view of University College the morning after the fire is from a photograph in the possession of Miss A. W. Patterson, the President's Secretary, who has been good enough to allow a copy to be made.

The copious extracts from Wilson's private journal contain many allusions to people with whom he was brought in contact, both in Scotland and in Canada. Naturally, in a journal written for his own use, the names occur without comment, and often the context supplies no clue as to who these persons were. In order to avoid cumbering the pages with notes, the explanation is appended in briefest form to the name as it appears in the Index. But in the case of those individuals

with whom Wilson's official relations were close, and to whom frequent reference is made, it has seemed advisable to append explanatory footnotes at the first mention of each.

The private journal which has supplied by far the greater part of the information used in this volume was placed at the disposal of the author by Miss Sybil Wilson, Sir Daniel Wilson's daughter. She herself has since passed away beyond the reach of acknowledgment.

H. H. LANGTON

# CHAPTER I

## EARLY LIFE

THE first president of the University of Toronto, a position created to meet the new conditions introduced by the Act of 1887, was Dr. Daniel Wilson, already, since 1881, President of University College. Both before and since his appointment as head of the College Wilson had been a conspicuous figure in University life, and he occupies an important place in the educational history of Canada. A peculiar interest attaches to his career from his many-sided activity. His picturesque appearance, with flowing locks, once jet-black, but iron-grey later, and almost white at the close of his life, was very familiar to people who lived in Toronto forty years ago and more, and his geniality and ready wit, together with a style of popular eloquence which suited occasions of ceremony, made him an acceptable guest at public functions and entertainments. The following pages are an attempt to give a more intimate and personal account of his character, career and varied interests, than can be found in any history of that University with which so much of his life was identified.

Wilson was born in Edinburgh in 1816, the eldest son of Archibald Wilson, a wine merchant. Not much is known of the father. He was a quiet man, and his business, which occupied all his attention, was not very successful. The son, as he looked back towards the close of his own life on those earlier years in Edinburgh, writes in his journal the following estimate of his father:—

> An amiable kindly man who should have been a happy one, but the world did not prosper him; and he was not his own best friend.

By the testimony of a member of the family the chief contribution of the father to his son's character and mental equipment was a strong and abiding religious faith. He died suddenly in 1843 when Daniel, the eldest of his children, was twenty-seven years of age. A brother of Archibald, Peter Wilson, subsequently became the mainstay of the family. Frequently in his letters and journal Wilson speaks of this uncle in terms of affection and gratitude, as a second father whose unfailing support and encouragement had enabled him to turn many critical corners in his career. When a new edition of his earliest acknowledged book, *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time,* was issued in 1891, Wilson writes thus in his journal—

> When it issued from the press in olden days, when I was young, it was a special pleasure to me

> to dedicate my first work to the kindest and truest of friends, my good uncle. Through long years he has lived for me only in memory, but most truly cherished there.

But the real head of the Wilson family was the mother. She was a woman of strong intellect, and of an impulsive, artistic temperament. In a volume of essays by Dr. John Brown, a much appreciated writer in his own generation, there is a paper on Dr. George Wilson, Daniel's younger brother, whose death had occurred shortly before, and in it, after mentioning that Wilson's mother still lived to mourn his loss, the author says—

> Any one who has had the privilege to know him, and enjoy his bright and rich and beautiful mind, will not need to go far to learn where it was that her son George got all of that genius and worth and delightfulness which is transmissible. She verifies what is so often and so truly said of the mothers of great men.

A small detail will show the originality of Mrs. Wilson's character. The changing fashions of dress annoyed her; they seemed unnecessary, they were undoubtedly expensive, and they had not even the merit of being improvements either in comfort or in beauty. So when she was about thirty years of age she designed for herself a sort of uniform, which is said to have been by no means unbecoming,

and from which she never varied for the rest of her life. She must have shown marked literary ability, but her domestic occupations did not allow her the time in which to cultivate this talent. Here we have her son's testimony, written in his journal twenty-five years after her death:—

> And my dear mother did write verse and might have made her mark. But her life was a troubled one, full of cares and sorrows, and it was not her gift either to take cares lightly or to help others to do so, though I have cherished her excellent practical maxim, which she failed to apply to personal account: never to sup sorrow with a long spoon.

Archibald Wilson had a large family, but only six children survived infancy, of whom Daniel was the eldest. To him especially his mother was devoted, and in his successive steps to fame and prosperity she took great pride. Next to Daniel came George, perhaps the most brilliant of the family, who became one of the leading chemists of the day and a professor in Edinburgh University, and who is still known as the author of the standard Life of Henry Cavendish. He also wrote verse, and an interesting semi-philosophical book called *The Five Gateways of Knowledge*. Another son died before reaching manhood, and the remaining three children were daughters, of whom the youngest was married to

James Sime, a literary man living in London, the author of Lives of Goethe and Lessing. She herself wrote a Life of her brother, George Wilson.

But the household comprised more than these. A widowed sister of Mrs. Wilson died in 1827 leaving four small orphans, who were immediately added to the Wilson family, and brought up like brothers and sister of the Wilson children. One of these Russell cousins, James, was a lad of great promise, who died in 1844 at the age of twenty-one. He had already written some charming poetry, which was later printed for private circulation, along with poems by Daniel and George Wilson, in a volume called *Memorials of Cousins.* Another of the Russells, Alexander, took orders and migrated to Australia where he eventually became Dean of the Cathedral at Adelaide, and died in 1886. In Wilson's journal occurs the following comment on this cousin, written upon receiving news of his death:—

> We were as brothers in the old days, so very long ago, when he came to us as an orphan child and with his brothers and sister grew up with us as members of the same family. I was then eleven years old, he I fancy not more than five or perhaps four. It is close upon sixty years ago, and we have not seen each other for forty years. A fine fellow, a follower of Maurice, and with much of his kindly, self-sacrificing spirit.

The bond between the two families of cousins thus brought up together was very strong, and there are many affectionate references to them in Wilson's journal. Here is a characteristic extract:—

> In the College Hall to-day, after distributing the Easter examination papers in Modern History, my fancy wandered away to the old past, the home circle on the Calton Hill—the humble home of my early youth—and then James Square, with our four orphan cousins added to the group; what a busy, merry, noisy, hearty household we were, careless of the future, idle in all but fun.

The three elder boys, Daniel and George Wilson and John Russell, were close friends. Together they attended the Edinburgh High School, where among their schoolmates were two, afterwards closely associated with Daniel Wilson in Toronto, George Brown and George Paxton Young. Their pastimes after school and on holidays were the same. It may be conjectured that Daniel as the eldest was the leading spirit, and their great holiday amusement was one which seems to have been of his choosing. It was no less than a systematic exploration of old Edinburgh and its immediate neighbourhood in search of the picturesque. In those days the romantic revival was in full course. Sir Walter Scott was still alive and everywhere in Scotland was looked upon with reverence and affection. The boys, like the rest of

the world, were under the charm of his novels and of the historical romance of the old city in which they lived. They ransacked the wynds and closes of Edinburgh for quaint nooks and old buildings, and Daniel began the series of sketches which will be heard of again in connection with his first successful literary effort, *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time*. In those days the athletic sports which now take up so much of the leisure time of boys and girls were not so systematically pursued, and the artistic and antiquarian researches of these three boys afforded quite as much exercise in the open air as devotion to cricket or football would have done, and supplied a far superior intellectual training.

But school and sketching rambles did not exhaust the mental energies of Daniel. In 1828, when he was twelve years old, he and other school-friends had founded a "Juvenile Society for the Advancement of Knowledge" which held formal meetings at the Wilson house on Friday evenings and even issued a Journal of its proceedings, presumably in manuscript. The roll of members is not extant. Six years later when he became a student at Edinburgh University he joined the student club called "The Universal Brotherhood of Friends of Truth", and contributions from his pen appeared in the student publication *Maga*. It is interesting to see how many dis-

tinguished men were in their student days associated with Wilson in this club. "The soul of it," says Mrs. Sime in her life of George Wilson, "was Edward Forbes. Among its members were Goodsir, Bennett, Blackie, Forbes, Lyon Playfair, George Wilson, all afterwards professors in Edinburgh University, also Day, professor at Saint Andrews, Ramsay of the Geological Survey, and Daniel Wilson." While a student at the University, Daniel, in conjunction with his brother and cousin, organized a debating society named the "Edinburgh Zetalethic" and became its secretary, but it did not survive his departure two years later.

The impulse to literature was strong in the Wilson family, and Daniel as well as George wielded a facile pen both in prose and verse. But for the former it was devotion to art, not literature, that decided the choice of a career. He had for some years even before entering the University been learning the technique of steel engraving in the studio of William Miller, a well known engraver of the day, and in 1835 he left the University without taking a degree and gave himself up entirely to his chosen profession. An account of this plunge into art, with the interesting sequel of an acquaintance with Turner, was written down by himself in later years and may be given here in full.

May 25, 1889.

The occurrence of a sketch or professed portrait of Turner, in the *Methodist Magazine* . . . has revived many curious memories of the old London days when I was young and sanguine, just entering on the battle of life, full of undefined, ambitious longings and vague aspirations which have ended so diversely from anything dreamt of. There is a likeness of Turner in the National Gallery, painted by himself in very early days. Another portrait of him was painted by Dance and has been engraved. He was then in his 26th year. The elements of the vulgar prosaic features of the poet-painter, as I remember them, may be traced in the handsome young face with the large nose and somewhat sensual mouth. The forehead was receding. In fact, physically, intellectually, and morally he was an enigma. Dance's portrait was the last for which he sat, the only one indeed. He took a keen interest in photography when first brought into use, and was repeatedly photographed; but he took care to have all the negatives effaced. What his precise motives were it is hard to guess. But he had an invincible repugnance to having his portrait preserved. Nevertheless he could not enforce an injunction on the pencils of his brother-artists, and his strange uncouth figure, as I remember it, presented an equal temptation to the sketcher and caricaturist. It is well known accordingly that he was repeatedly sketched by Dance, Gilbert, Maclise and others. No doubt the above [cut from the *Methodist Magazine*] reproduces a sketch from

life. I recognize the figure more than the face, but both are true, though the latter is refined on the original.

It was in the year 1830, I believe, that I first looked upon a drawing by the great master of landscape painting. In that year I was entered as a pupil in the studio of William Miller, the eminent engraver, with the idea that art was to be, in some form, my life-pursuit. There stood then on an easel in the studio one of Turner's large water-colour drawings—a view of the Tower of London from the Thames—which Mr. Miller was engraving on a large scale. It has been a lesson to me for life. To my uneducated eye it seemed a daub. But the time came when I fully sympathized in the earnest appreciation of Turner which was a characteristic of W. Miller, and enjoyed all the beauty and artistic power of the pictures to which I was then blind. In the studio at Miller Field Turner could be studied in all his best phases. There I saw some of his finest large water-colour drawings. Then came a succession of the exquisite little gems furnished by the artist to illustrate Rogers' Poems. Next we had the large oil painting of the Grand Canal, Venice, engraved by W.M. on the largest scale. Then came the beautiful small drawings for Scott's works, and then the strange productions for "The River Scenery of France". No one who knows them only through the medium of the engraver's art, and especially the elaborately detailed frontispiece by Higham of Rouen Cathedral, and the beautiful distant view

of Rouen and the valley of the Seine, engraved by W.M. in his best manner, could imagine the strange aspect of the artist's sketches. They are probably long ago mounted and treasured in some collector's folio, among his most prized possessions. But they were little calculated to win popular favour as they then appeared. They were executed in what seemed the most slovenly fashion, on coarse blue paper, such as a grocer uses for wrapping up his sugar loaves. The edges were rough and ragged, as if carelessly cut by a paper folder; and the style of work reproduced, on a small scale, that of the scene painter. The sky and many of the middle tints were produced by the blue ground of the pages, over which the yellows, reds, and greys splashed in what seemed the most haphazard style; yet with the marvellous results reproduced in some—though only in some —of the engravings. The style of art might have served to inspire one phase of Oliver Wendell Holmes' "Contentment":—

> "Of pictures I should like to own
> . . . One Turner and no more . . .
> A landscape:—foreground golden dirt,
> The sunshine painted with a squirt."

More slight or slovenly sketches could not well be imagined; and as to detail, that is due to the engraver, who in his effort at supplying the detail which his art rendered imperative was in danger of sacrificing the atmospheric effect and real beauty of the slight drawings. W.M. knew well

how to avoid this danger. The "Rouen", another of the plates engraved by him, with the Cathedral a prominent object, and a rainbow on the left, reproduces with admirable effect the artistic handling of the body colour worked over the rough blue paper, so as to suggest the richness of detail without its actual elaboration; the result of which in the hands of inferior engravers is the sacrifice of the tone and breadth of effect in which all the real worth of the sketches lay. I well remember watching with curious interest the translation of the bedaubed scrap of coarse blue paper into the beautiful engraving of Rouen. Thus educated into some adequate appreciation of the great landscape painter, I went to London in 1837, eager, enthusiastic, sanguine, bent on winning some prize in the lottery of life. I had already like Aurora Leigh

> "learned the use
> Of the editorial *we* in a review,"

by and by indeed reviewed Ruskin's "Modern Painters" in the *British Quarterly*. But my aims were more artistic than literary, though I wrote a tragedy and submitted "Evelyne" to the kindly critical censorship of Macready. I was eager to engrave a Turner on the largest scale, and I succeeded.

I was young and wholly inexperienced in the world's ways. I had left the old home with five pounds in my pocket, and all the world before me where to choose my place of work, and Providence

my guide; as with the first pair when turned out of the old home. I scrambled along, with experiences to be smiled at now. The mail brought welcome letters from her who was already the lodestar of my life. The chance of being able to set up a home of my own seemed remote enough. But after unsuccessful attempts in various directions I introduced myself to Alderman Moon—then foremost among the art publishers, and by and by Sir Francis Grahame Moon, Lord Mayor of London. His place of business was a small old-fashioned nook behind the old Exchange which was burnt down while I was leading bachelor life in London. In the clearance that followed for the new building and the widening of adjoining thoroughfares Moon's old nook on Threadneedle Street vanished. In the privately printed memoir of William Miller—a quarto that would have benefited by condensation—is a letter of W.M. addressed to "the great art publisher" on the 22nd of the eighth month 1839, in which that liberal patron of art is most wisely bound down in very specific terms to 650 guineas as the payment for the engraving of Turner's "Modern Italy" on a scale of 24 inches by 17. But W.M. stood in the forefront of engravers, and had to be sued, not to sue. I presented myself to the Alderman hat in hand, as a young adventurer, with my reputation to win, soliciting his aid to help me to the opportunity. I found him a wonderfully oily, fair-spoken gentleman, delighted to patronize rising talent, as long as he saw a reasonable prospect of

coining his patronage into gold. He invited me to dine with him at Finsbury Square, a most patronizing act of condescension. We discussed Turner and high art, fame, fortune, and futurity; and it was finally agreed that he was to secure the copyright of one of Turner's pictures which I was to engrave on the largest scale for £100, and if successful it was to be followed by another at £500. Had I been rich in the world's wisdom I should have insisted on reducing the terms to writing. But the money element was of small account with me then—not that I was troubled with any excess of it! I was eager to be allowed an opportunity to try my prentice hand; and that secured I had no fear for the future. The "Moon" in later years figured in "Punch" and other comic sheets as foremost among the City luminaries. He had succeeded to the shop and business of the more famous Alderman Boydell in the quaint, crooked, and narrow old London thoroughfare which vanished half a century ago. Fortune smiled on him. He achieved wealth, a knighthood and Whittington's civic chair. He was not held in honour by the artists, whom he patronized, and occasionally with ostentatious display. But he was a shrewd man of business, knew what would sell, could diagnose the aesthetic susceptibilities of art patrons, feel the pulse of the public, flatter the weakness of a sanguine aspirant for fame, and with the help of his own moonshine turn all into gold.

Under the guidance of this civic Apollo I drove in a cab to the dingy old mansion, 47 Queen Anne

Street West, to have my first introduction to the great painter, and if possible obtain permission to engrave one of his pictures. I had been a devout worshipper of him before the "Oxford Graduate" undertook to be his prophet. But I was also familiar with the stories of his eccentric vagaries and his parsimonious greed. Had I known his better qualities, as I learned afterwards to appreciate them, I would have gone directly to the painter, and probably fared better. His old housekeeper, a queer bundle of wrappages, opened the door and after some parleying ushered us into a room on the ground floor. The shutters were only partially open, and the window-panes, obscured with dirt, admitted very imperfectly the light of a gloomy November day. After what seemed a long delay the door was abruptly opened by an old, slovenly dressed, slouching little man, as remote from the ideal of artist or poet as could well be conceived. Yet even then I noted the wonderful flash of his keen grey eyes, which redeemed the otherwise vulgar and sensual look. They were very odd eyes, very partially opened, and shining through the two little chinks below his eyebrows in a very cunning and irate fashion. The alderman had been condescendingly patronizing me in a very ostentatious fashion, to which, as became a humble suppliant, I meekly submitted. But as soon as the painter's eyes were fixed on him all this vanished. Turner's style of address was abrupt, if not insolent. He was dealing with one of a class who made money out of him, and would overreach him

if they could. So he abruptly addressed Moon: "Well, what do you want?", pretty much in the style that one would use to a begging imposter, and the Alderman's patronizing airs vanished. He became cringing and obsequious. The interview, however, was not unexpected. Turner was only revenging himself for old experiences when he had to go, hat in hand, to such patrons. I trembled for my chances of success, but his manner to me was more gracious, and after inspecting some specimens of my handiwork he responded with an amiable grunt. I was introduced into the gallery cumbered with the treasures of art that now fill the Turner galleries at Trafalgar Square, and he indicated the picture he chose to let me have. It was not the one I would have chosen, but it was triumph enough to get one of his choice. My youthful ambition was in a fair way of realization. With all the enthusiasm of a young dreamer I stole into St. Paul's, and at the close of the service knelt at the altar rail and prayed for success in what seemed to me then a great undertaking. And to a youth dependent on his own pen and pencil for bread, a work that involved the labour of many months was no trifling undertaking.

The door of the strange house in Queen Anne Street was no longer closed to me. I paid repeated visits there, found that the great painter could be kind and even genial to an enthusiastic youth, while grimly ridiculing his enthusiasm. I was privileged to enter the "inaccessible gallery" where, in dust and damp, were piled against the wall some

of the choice pictures seen by me for the first time after they became the property of the nation.

As to "The Embarkation of Regulus" on which I was allowed to try my prentice hand, it is one of a class bluntly characterized by Ruskin as "nonsense pictures", and when in later years the great art critic commended my translation of the picture he added: "But it is labour thrown away; for the picture is one of Turner's grand mistakes, an artifice, not a study." As a piece of sunlight, however, it is a wonderful study. It lights up my room as though I had learned in those old days the art of extracting sunbeams from cucumbers.

The "Regulus" which Turner entrusted to me was first exhibited at the British Institution in 1837, and did not meet with a purchaser; nor is it one that—even were I a wealthy man—I would select for myself. It is one of his "Claude" compositions; though, as I found, nothing could incense him more than to hint at any trace of Claude in his pictures. It is an artificial vista of architecture and shipping arranged after the fashion of the side scenes on the stage; but redeemed by many apt minor details, and above all by the marvellous glow of sunshine. In the "Memorials of Hope Park," the privately printed memoir of William Miller and his kin, is a letter from the eminent engraver, Pye. Mr. John Pye wrote to W.M. inviting him to engrave a plate from the pictures in the National Gallery of "the picture by Claude (perhaps the most perfectly beautiful specimen of that Master) of which the accompanying is a memor-

andum". The memorandum sketch accordingly shows the pillars of an impossible ruin marshalled in stage fashion at one side; a pillared façade meeting [?matching] it at the other; a tower with an archway beyond; and the blazing sun with its bright illumined path over the waters. If it were designated the Claude receipt for landscape composition—as it well might be—then Turner's "Regulus" is undoubtedy fashioned after the same prescription, though much less artificial and improbable. But both painters went direct to nature for the mastery of sunshine and atmospheric effect. After criticism has done its worst, the beauty of the National Gallery Claude as a grand triumph in the representation of sunlight charms every lover of true art, and makes him indifferent to the theatrical disposition of the scenic display. It is greatly to be regretted that W.M. was unable to undertake the engraving, and so to have fulfilled in another and more durable form the ambition of Turner to marshall his own best works in rivalry with those of Claude.

But in one respect at least the artist of Lorraine has time on his side. His pictures are solidly painted, with enduring pigments. Turner would seemingly make any sacrifice to get the effect he aimed at. He had, moreover, worked so much and on so large a scale in water-colour that he was prone to resort to the same processes when painting in oil. The "Regulus" is hung too high to admit of any close inspection; but, judging from its general effect, I fancy it is still much in

the same condition as when I was familiar with every touch on the canvas. But should it ever pass into the hands of an unwary picture cleaner, my engraving may acquire a value as the memorial of a lost picture. There was a story current among the artists of my early days of Wallis having obtained one of Turner's pictures to engrave, and rashly setting to work with sponge and water he washed the clothes off the principal group of figures and otherwise reduced the picture to a condition that compelled him to return it to the painter, and put an end to his chance of ever engraving another "Turner". The story has every probability in its favour. My own experience was that in making a slight attempt with the wet corner of a silk handkerchief to remove a spot of dirt, I made the discovery that if my operations were extended the whole clouds and tinting of the sky, with much else, would vanish, as they are all painted over an oil ground in mere size colours. These had obviously darkened, so that allowance had to be made for this in finishing the engraving.

The great African city, which somehow impressed itself strongly on Turner's imagination, is symbolized by palatial architectural piles, and shipping of archaic form and rigging crowd the harbour. As to Regulus, the small figure in Roman toga descending the great flight of steps of the palace on the right, he is not likely to be noticed in the original picture—is indeed out of sight as it now hangs. In the final touches, as the engraving drew to a close, Turner gave more

prominence to it in the touched proof. In a group of sailors on the left in the foreground the barrel of nails is introduced in a much more prominent fashion, in allusion to the cruel fate of the Roman Consul on his return; while—according to the motto composed by Turner for another of this class of pictures, his "Decline of the Carthaginian Empire"—

> "While o'er the western wave the ensanguined sun
> In gathering haze a stormy signal spread,
> And set portentous."

He was indeed a true poet in the rendering of the ideal of his subject through the medium of his art, making sky and cloud, sunshine and gloom harmonize with the theme and embody a story that needed no interpreting motto. But as for his attempts in the poet's art with pen instead of pencil, and an inkbottle superseding the palette, they are the most singular demonstrations of a poet "wanting the facility of verse", and in truth any command of language.

The Claude-like composition of the "Regulus" so impressed my mind that soon after my first visit to the Gallery in Queen Anne Street West I devoted a day to the study of the Claude engravings in the print room of the British Museum; and, on the whole regarding it as a commendable mark of zeal, I mentioned it to Turner on my next visit. To my surprise he assailed me in the wildest manner. Much good Claude would do me.

What did I mean? Did I intend to copy his painting? What did I know of Claude? etc., etc. I was alarmed lest he should withdraw the coveted painting, just as my ambitions were on the eve of realization; and after soothing his ire to the best of my ability, I took good care never again to mention the name of Claude in his hearing. But thenceforth I fully appreciated his sense of rivalry with the great French landscape painter, and was in no degree surprised when, in making the splendid bequest of his gallery of paintings to the nation, he conditioned that one of his "Carthage" pictures, and a beautiful sunrise, should be hung between Claude's two great pictures "The Seaport" and "The Mill".

The gruff onslaught on me for imagining that any help could be got, in the translation of his work, by a study of Claude, led to another and equally characteristic scene. He demanded of me what were to be the proportions of my reduction of his painting, and scornfully resented the idea that that depended on those of his own canvas. So I undertook to submit to him my reduced drawing. In my subsequent interview to settle the proportions of the engraving I ventured to take with me an artist friend, James Giles; and a letter of his written at a long subsequent date, describing this as the only time he ever saw the great painter, recalls to my memory some forgotten incidents of the interview.

The original picture was unusually high for its length; though this seems to have been a shape

favoured by him. The proportions of his famous "Slave Ship" in the Boston Gallery are such, and on looking at it I feel that it would be improved by covering up a portion of the sea in the fore-front. But Turner had ideas of his own about the proper proportions of an engraving, and was prone to demand the impossible feat of realizing his ideal without varying from the actual proportions of the original. There is no disguising from oneself that, however marvellous the intellectual powers of the great poet-painter in his own special line of art, he had in later years given himself up largely to sensual indulgence. The fine gold was woefully tarnished and overlaid with dross and slime. J. G. describes the strange, slovenly, uncouth figure, of which the foregoing sketch [from the *Methodist Magazine*] is a flattering presentation. He had a besotted look, partly due to the fact that he was suffering from a bad cold. Shabby in dress, with dirty linen, a large coloured handkerchief tied like a poultice round his neck, and into which his chin was sunk, the figure was completed by an old slouched hat drawn over his eyes. I had by this time become so familiar with the strange eccentric artist that I was less impressed with his grotesque contrast to the ideal formed in the mind of any admiring student of his works. I was now more at my ease with him, knowing his gruff ways, and that "his bark was waur than his bite", as the old Scotch proverb has it. So I inquired as to his health, and accepted the bluff response, "Oh, very bad." I had brought

Turner's Ancient Carthage, the Embarkation of Regulus

*(From the engraving executed by Daniel Wilson in 1841)*

a memorandum of the dimensions of the picture with the reduced drawing, which he at once declared could not be correct. "I tell you it is the right shape"; and when I evaded the contest on this point and indicated the desired change, the response was: "It can't be done; I tell you it can't be done." Then on my suggesting some other modification: "Worse still, young man, I tell you it can't be done." I had by this time come to know his ways. There was no use meeting his absurdest misstatements with a direct contradiction, but, after an amusing wrangle in which his irritability exhausted itself, he ended, "Well, if it must be, leave your drawing with me and I'll see to it. But I tell you its right in the picture. Your drawing must be wrong. There's some mistake."

When I saw him shortly after, he had my drawing before him. I made no reference to our previous conversation. Had I ventured to hint that the proportions of my drawing were the same as his picture, the old wrangle would have been renewed, and he would probably have insisted on the production of his ideal proportions without deviating a hair's breadth from the actual picture. But having thus given free vent to his humour he took my drawing in hand and did all that I desired. In the picture as actually engraved it is not only reduced in height by taking a piece off the sky, and also, I think, off the foreground, but it is lengthened on both sides, though chiefly on the left. There Turner drew in additional masts and rigging; and told me to be sure

to return the drawing to him when I had made the transfer for my etching. The actual dimensions are 22¼ by 15. Miller's engraving of the "Grand Canal, Venice" is 22¾ by 14⅞. For the one I got £100, for the other W.M. received £500 —certainly not too large a price for the laborious industry, prolonged through months, which resulted in an engraving of which Ruskin says: "There is no better representation of Turner's work by line engraving. The sky especially is exquisite." The painting was sold ultimately for 7000 guineas.

As my months of patient labour drew to a close Turner's hints and touches on my proofs were very valuable. His skill in this respect was marvellous. The engraver's art is not a mere copying. The painter has all the advantages of colour, and aims at reproducing Nature in her own garb and atmosphere. But the engraver's work is equivalent to that of the translator of a poem into another language. His is a translation in which the equivalents of colour have to be rendered by texture, and light and shade; to produce by mere variations of one black tint the effect achieved by the gorgeous colours of a Turner. It is a severe test to the painter, but tried by it he far surpasses Claude. He never lost his command of atmospheric effect. The most extravagant vagaries of his latest stage of flaring colour, when reduced by the process of the engraver to their true equivalents of light and shade, revealed the power of the great master of chiaroscuro—"the Prince of the power of the air", as one of his old critics aptly styled him. When my am-

bitious undertaking was finished Turner expressed himself, in his gruff way, as pleased;—"Better than I expected of you" were his parting words; and so I saw my last of the strangely gifted artist. As for Moon, he gave me a note at three months' date for my poor little hundred pounds. It was the first of my experiences in "paper", and I did not know what to make of the mysterious substitute for my hard-earned shekels. As for the promised new plate at a remunerative price, the hope of which had buoyed me up through many a long day's work, he shilly-shallied, and when pressed to fulfil his bargain could not remember that he had ever made such a promise. As for me I went down to Scotland where my ever kind uncle cashed my note for me. I produced my "Regulus" as a proof that I had "won my spurs", claimed my bride, and ere long turned to letters. Had Moon kept good faith with me it might have altered the whole subsequent course of my life. No thanks to him that I then caught the tide which, taken at the height, led on to fortune* . . .

The struggle to establish himself in London as an engraver actually lasted for three years. During part of the time he was cheered by the companionship of his brother George who joined him there in the autumn of 1838. Their lodgings were in what was then the extreme verge of town, the village of Stratford-le-Bow on the border of Essex. It was conven-

* A reproduction of this engraving is given opposite to page 32.

ient for such health-giving country walks as the brothers had been accustomed to in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, but it was very far from University College in Gower Street where the younger was at work daily in the chemical laboratory of Professor Graham as an unsalaried assistant. One day George, who was liable to fits of abstraction from his material surroundings, lost himself in the course of the long tramp from lodgings to the College, and as a result of this experience they changed their quarters to a lodging near Euston Square. This pleasant association of the two brothers did not last longer than five months. In 1839 George returned to Edinburgh and his life was thenceforward passed in that city. Daniel remained alone in London for a year and a half, during which time he not only finished his engraving of Turner's picture but also obtained such steady employment in writing reviews and in other miscellaneous literary work that he felt justified in taking the great step of matrimony.

He was married on October 28, 1840, to Margaret Mackay of Glasgow, where her father was engaged in business. It was, as Wilson notes in his journal on a later anniversary, a rash step with his slender prospect of making a living, but admirably justified by the results. Mrs. Wilson supplied just that element of caution and carefulness in the management of this world's goods which her husband lacked,

and her calm, equable temperament balanced and corrected his enthusiasm and impetuosity. It had been a very early attachment. They had come to an understanding before Wilson had made his start in London. Now at the age of twenty-four he brought his bride to lodgings in Camden Town and settled down to the hard task of earning a livelihood by his pen.

There is small record of the literary output of those first years. It must have consisted mainly of papers for such popular magazines as *Chambers' Journal,* the composition of which entailed much research in encyclopaedias and other works of reference at the British Museum. But after little more than two years of married life in London Wilson returned with his wife to Scotland and settled in Edinburgh. His father's sudden death in March 1843 soon followed, and the desire to be near his mother and his brother and sisters must have confirmed him in his change of abode. His writing too could be done as well in Edinburgh as in London, indeed rather more advantageously, because in Edinburgh he was in contact with his school-friend, William Nelson, now the head of an enterprising publishing house, and for the firm of Thomas Nelson and Sons he compiled many a cheap popular book during the next half-dozen years. Most of them were issued without the name of the author, but some, doubtless those of more ambitious character, were acknowledged. There

was, for instance, a *History of Oliver Cromwell*, printed in 1848. At a much later date, when Wilson was professor of history in University College, Toronto, he spoke to the College librarian of that day about the advisability of having in the library some work on Cromwell besides the well-known volumes by Carlyle. The librarian said that the library already possessed a history of Cromwell by one Daniel Wilson. "Pack of trash!" was the author's reply, and with this criticism of his early effort the judicious historian will probably agree. Another signed work of this early period is a *History of the Puritans*. These two small books show that Wilson's tastes and sympathies inclined him to history. At the same time he was delving more and more into the antiquities of his own country, pushing his researches far back into the remote past of which practically the only records are burial mounds and similar archaeological remains. In 1846 he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and in 1847 became one of the honorary secretaries.

But he did not emancipate himself for several years more from the drudgery of writing "pot-boilers" for the Nelsons and other publishers of popular series or for magazines. An entry in his journal gives a partial list of these performances, which he never willingly claimed as part of his literary output. The occasion of the entry was the publication of a sketch

of his career in Morgan's *Celebrated Canadians*, hopelessly confused and wrong in its statement of facts, coupled with a request from Mr. Morgan for a full list of all his writings for insertion in a second edition. The extract is interesting as showing the conditions of authorship of such a character in Wilson's day, and the humiliations to which the hack writer was forced to submit.

> It has set me thinking over all the good, bad and indifferent; cheerful and useful; cheery, weary, dreary; dull, stale and useless pen-work I have done; some for love, some for the bubble fame, a good deal for the penny-fee, and a good deal more for anything rather than money. Here goes for an attempt at a list of the whole, or at any rate, at some imperfectly articulated skeleton of such bones as are recoverable out of the grave of the past. First came the pot-boilers.

The list of "pot-boilers" includes articles in *Tait's Magazine*, *Chambers' Journal*, *Chambers' Information for the People*, *Nelson's British Library*, and the *Scotsman*. For the latter he was the regular art critic for many years. After the list of "pot-boilers" he continues:—

> Another kind of hack-work lies on my conscience. There is a book, very worthless at its best, styled *The House of God in History*. It is the production of an American divine, and in the original is spiced for its intended American readers in a

fashion scarcely suited to the palate of an English public. The book is a fair specimen of a numerous class which in the absence of international copyright and under the influence of America's systematic book-piracy became fair game for a certain class of English publishers. Such a book is prepared for the British public by making the author say not what he wrote, but what in the judgment of the British editor and publisher he should have written. The only apology for such injustice and wrong is that it constitutes the only reprisals for this American system of wholesale piracy which British authors and publishers in vain ask to be remedied by an international copyright system.*

This censorship of the American press is sometimes carried to an amusing length. Mrs. H. B. Stowe would perhaps be astonished to discover that in Nelson's edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that pious lady's work had to be freed of sundry "profane" expressions before it could be presented to a select and religious British public. I discovered to my surprise and amusement that my own *Oliver Cromwell* had been put through the same purifying sieve after its proofs left my hands. In the original this passage occurs in reference to Lesley's Scottish army:—"They had placed in command, says Sir Edward Walker, 'for the most part ministers' sons, clerks, and other sanctified creatures who hardly ever saw or heard of any sword but that of the Spirit' ". Quotation though it is, it

* This was written in 1870.

stands now: 'others who hardly ever before had seen a sword'!!! Perhaps the crowning reform of the faulty text was when, in reference to a modern disturbance of the graves on Naseby battlefield, the words from the well known line on Shakespeare's grave in the chancel at Stratford-on-Avon are quoted—"Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear". The censor, missing both the source and application, rigorously erased the profane passage. Concerning which I had a passage of arms with the publisher, rather amusing, but helping with other causes to bring my engagement as professional literary hack to an end. I had already published my *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time,* 2 vols., 4to, 1847. But it was while fagging at such hack-work as is indicated above, and as a relief from the drudgery, that I wrote the *Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland,* 1851, rewritten and revised, and reproduced in two volumes as *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland,* 1863.

Here may be enumerated my other works, more of the *con amore* class, though the first I name belong but partially to this class. In 1851 two little volumes were written for the Tract Society:

Old Edinburgh, a historical sketch of the ancient metropolis of Scotland.
Modern Edinburgh (from the 18th century).

The books were written with an eye to the Society and its requirements (The London Religious Tract Society), but as the publishing secre-

tary insisted on tacking a moral of his own to sundry chapters I refused to allow my name to stand on the title-pages, and so ended my dealings with the Tract Society.

Here also may be enumerated the wonted quota by knights of the quill of sacrifices to the muse, and first a volume entitled

Spring Wild Flowers, by Wil D'Leina of the Outer Temple.

Its origin indeed in this form was my engagement to furnish a series of gem volumes of original and selected verse. Under this *nom-de-plume* a volume of original verse was issued with a dedication to my infant daughter. Few, if any, of my friends ever knew of my being guilty of such a deed. Other poetical perpetrations appeared in various forms and vehicles. In the *Scotsman* appeared from time to time any occasional *jeu d'esprit* or skit at passing events, such as

The Bailies' Raid,
The Provost and the coal-bunker,

and other assaults on the destroyers of Trinity College Church, the vandals who sought to demolish John Knox's House, etc. Articles on the fine arts, antiquities and local matters of various kinds were also contributed to the same paper, under the guidance of its editor, Mr. A. Russel. In 1840 the demolition of the Trinity College Church and removal of its royal foundress were the occasion of another *jeu d'esprit* privately printed in black let-

ter and professedly an antique, entitled *Ane Auld Prophecie.*

To the *Gentleman's Magazine* I was Edinburgh correspondent for a time, supplied obituaries, etc., till I left Scotland; to the *Athenaeum* also an occasional contributor.

In his account of his artistic experiences in London he mentions that he had written a tragedy and submitted it to the criticism of Macready. Nothing more is heard of it, and the ambitious author doubtless destroyed it. As it made no public appearance he does not include it in this list of his "pot-boilers", but he does record *The Curate's Daughter, a tale,* published in Nelson's popular series. There is no reference to any other work of imagination. His indulgences in this respect seem henceforth to have taken the form of verses. But while undergoing the drudgery of writing ephemeral books and magazine articles for a living he was engaged upon the more ambitious and enduring work, *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time,* published in two volumes in 1847, as mentioned in the above extract from his journal. It was copiously illustrated with woodcuts and engravings from his own sketches. This is what he has to say about it twenty-four years later, when approached by an Edinburgh publisher with a proposal for a new edition:

I had thought the book dead and buried. It is a queer kind of feeling with which I welcome this proposition of a new edition. It is something like being disturbed in one's grave. I almost wish things had remained as they were. *Quieta non movere*. When I hunted up the old volumes a host of vain longings and regrets that I had thought mastered long ago seemed to come trooping back. I opened and began to overhaul the old copy. Its historical crudities do not charm me; but from between its forgotten pages steal forth a thousand long-buried hopes. How much of my present self was there in that old-young antiquary, who ransacked the wynds and closes, the dens and garrets of old Edinburgh with such loving enthusiasm! We are certainly two very different beings. I admire his diligence but wonder if it were worth the results, and think what very different work I should make of it now.

The book referred to so slightingly owes its chief interest to the illustrations. As already mentioned, he had, even from school days, been a diligent sketcher of picturesque houses and nooks in the old town, and he was now provided with a vast number of these drawings from which to choose illustrations for his book. For many years these illustrations have been the only record of buildings that were pulled down long ago in the interest of modern sanitation and comfort. When showing these sketches to an artistic friend in later years Wilson remarked of one

that he had made it lying on his back on the scaffold from which workmen were demolishing another part of the building. Since Wilson's death the whole invaluable collection of his early sketches of sites and buildings in Edinburgh has been given to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and remains a prime source of information as to what Old Edinburgh looked like in the first half of the nineteenth century, before the period of expansion and reconstruction had set in. The illustration opposite to page 48 is reproduced from a sketch taken at this period of his life.

The publication of this book began to enhance Wilson's reputation as a scholar as well as a writer, and he followed it up with an effort to secure a more reliable source of livelihood than the compilation of popular manuals for enterprising firms of publishers. There is extant a scarce pamphlet, "Testimonials in favour of Mr. Daniel Wilson" for the position of Keeper of the Library of the Faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh, bearing the date 1848. The application, however, was unsuccessful.

His antiquarian studies were now becoming more and more engrossing, and in 1851 he published his *Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland,* probably the most important book that ever issued from his pen, and one which placed him at once in the front rank of archaeologists. It is a thorough

and comprehensive survey of the whole field of Scottish archaeology, and still remains a standard authority on the subject. A second edition, under the title *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland,* appeared in 1863. An interesting appreciation of this book, contained in a private letter from Dr. W. Douglas Simpson, Librarian of Aberdeen University, written in the latter part of 1927, may be quoted as showing what is the judgment of posterity upon Wilson as an archaeologist:

"He was unquestionably the pioneer of scientific Scottish archaeology, and in some respects he led the way for the whole world. I know of no book, with the exception of Worsaae's *Primeval Antiquities* of *Denmark,* which gave so systematic an account of the archaeology of any northern country as the first edition of Wilson's book did for Scotland. As you probably know, he was the first man to propound the view that the Celts were not the earliest human race in Britain, and quite recently Sir Arthur Keith has paid him a special tribute as a pioneer for the whole world in the application of craniometry to archaeological questions".

Wilson's subsequent career as an archaeologist did not bear out its early promise. He was soon to be called away to new occupations, and never again succeeded in writing a work on the same scale. He by no means abandoned the science but was insensibly

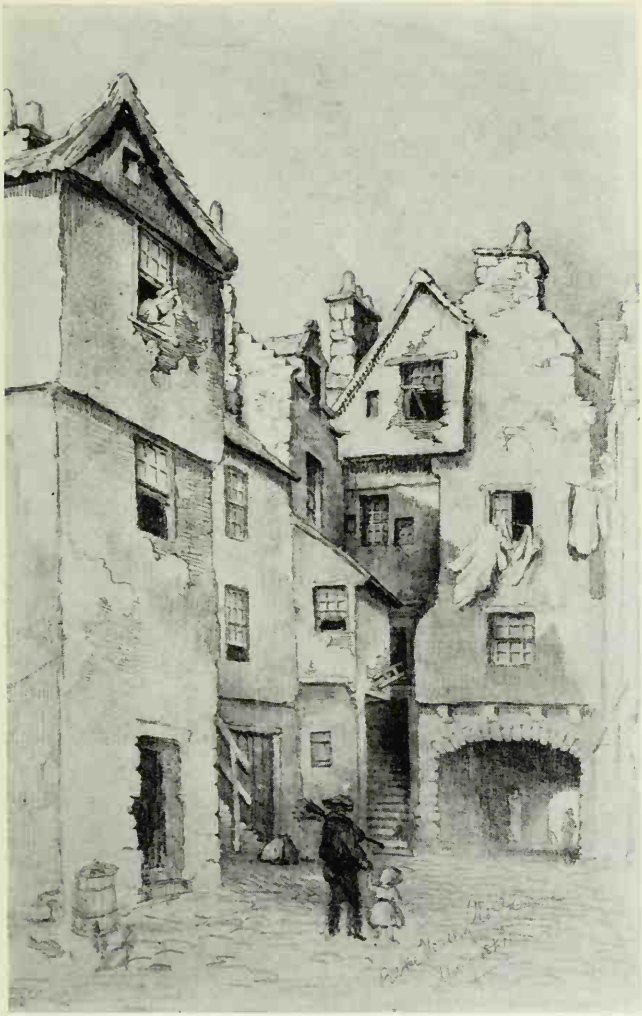
led into the kindred field of anthropology. In 1862, after the scene of his activity had changed to Canada, he gave to the world *Prehistoric Man,* the result of his investigations into the problems of prehistoric archaeology in the new world. There is no doubt that *Prehistoric Man* laid the foundation of archaeological study in Canada. It also contains much information on Indian customs that was new to the scientific world, information acquired in many instances at the cost of long and tedious journeys in the region north of Lake Superior. But the book will not bear comparison with the earlier one as a systematic treatise.

An immediate impression was made by his *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* upon the learned world, as is shown by the compliment paid the author by the University of Saint Andrews in conferring upon him the degree of LL.D. *honoris causa* in 1851, the same year that saw the publication of the book. Wilson had left the University of Edinburgh without a degree in order to enter upon the career of an engraver, and when his hope of success in this field vanished he must often have regretted that he had not remained at the University until the stamp of scholarship had been placed upon him in the shape of an ordinary degree. So this honorary degree from Saint Andrews was very welcome, and it undoubtedly served as a valuable credential when he was being

considered for the position of professor in University College, Toronto.

His reputation as an archaeologist was growing. He was invited to inspect and pass upon antiquities of various kinds, both in Scotland and in northern England, and made many journeys and many new friends in the course of them. We find him, for instance, in 1852 the guest of the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle. A letter to his wife, written on one of his antiquarian absences from home, deserves to be quoted for its humour and sound sense. After chaffing her about the difficulty he finds in filling a large sheet in a letter to her, and reminding her of the long ones that each of them used to write to the other in the days of their engagement, he says—

> I do not conclude on that account that we loved each other better than now after a dozen years of married life. But you and I were then two distinct people. Our sympathies were not without their influence on each other, but after all they moved in very different circles, and so we communicated like the plenipotentiaries of two friendly powers—not without sundry jealousies and threats of war—but on the whole with a very friendly regard to the recognized design of mutual alliance and projected league, offensive and defensive, against all the world. Now that the league is long ratified and we are one I feel it something



Bake House Close, Edinburgh

*(From a pencil sketch by Daniel Wilson, dated May, 1844)*

like setting about writing a letter to myself when I sit down to write to you. I have nothing to tell you that you do not know already. My very jokes and puns you have heard a hundred times. My graver grumblings and misanthropies you have rebuked into silence.

Meanwhile changes were taking place in the home circle. Wilson's father had died in 1843, a sister in 1847; two of the much beloved Russell cousins were also dead, Catharine in 1839, and James in 1844. Another sister had married in 1852 and lived in Birkenhead. He and his wife had now two little daughters. So kind Uncle Peter again came forward, and proposed to contribute to the family unity and happiness by building a house for them all, half of it to be inhabited by Mrs. Wilson the elder, her son George, the remaining unmarried sister, and Uncle Peter himself, the other half by Daniel with his wife and children. This comfortable and convenient arrangement was hardly concluded when it was completely upset by the appointment to Toronto. But for many years Wilson in his letters and in his journal continued to lament the cosy and picturesque Elm Cottage and to long for some change of fortune which might enable him again to occupy his half of the joint establishment.

## CHAPTER II

## REMOVAL TO TORONTO

THE turning-point in Wilson's career came in 1853 when at the age of thirty-seven he was offered and accepted a Chair in University College, Toronto. No doubt he welcomed the appointment on more grounds than one. It gave him a fixed income, presumably sufficient to live on in comfort if not in luxury. But chiefly it was a step up, and an opportunity for approving himself in a new field. It was not unreasonable to expect that if he succeeded in filling his Chair acceptably, and especially if the leisure time afforded by the long vacations enabled him to write another book of solid merit, then other opportunities would present themselves, and he might even cherish the hope of returning to his native country to occupy a Chair in one of its ancient universities.

This expectation was not fulfilled, but he did not abandon it for years. He had many friends in Edinburgh who would gladly have received him again into their circle. One opportunity is noted in his journal. In 1863 he received a telegram from Professor Simpson of Edinburgh University telling him of the death of Aytoun, who had occupied the Chair of English

Literature. Letters followed from other friends all urging him to present himself as a candidate. Within ten days of the first news he notes that he has dispatched testimonials in his favour from the leading Canadians with whom he had been on terms of intimacy, Mr. Justice Morrison, Chancellor of the University of Toronto, Chief Justice Draper*, Mr. Mowat,† Sir William Logan and others. His application for the vacant Chair, together with the testimonials, was sent to Sir George Grey, Home Secretary, the power of appointment being vested in the Crown. But Sir George Harvey, one of his Edinburgh supporters, writes despondently saying, "Your absence has been a great drawback to us in our exertions on your behalf", and forecasting the appointment of another candidate. Whereupon Wilson writes in his journal "So there ends that!" A month later the news arrived that David Masson had been appointed.

Nine years afterwards, in 1873, there are some mysterious allusions to the possibility of vacating the Toronto professorship, and he even goes so far as to sound his brother-in-law, James Sime, as to whether the succession to the Chair of English at Toronto

* William Henry Draper (1801-1877) came to Canada from England in 1820, was called to the bar of Upper Canada in 1828. He was appointed Solicitor-General in 1837 and Attorney-General in 1840, and continued to be a prominent figure in Canadian political life until 1847 when he accepted an appointment to the bench. He became Chief Justice of Upper Canada in 1863 and President of the Court of Error and Appeal in 1869.

† See footnote to page 84.

might be acceptable to the latter in case the possible vacancy occurred. The change contemplated, however, was probably to another sphere of life in Canada, not a return to Scotland.

But in 1853 Wilson's thoughts ran mainly upon acquitting himself with credit in his new position and upon establishing his family in Toronto. It was decided that he should proceed alone to Canada and that after a year Mrs. Wilson with the two little girls should follow. Time was required both to pack up the household goods that must be taken to the new home, and to dispose of such furniture as could be more conveniently or economically replaced in Toronto. A winter alone in the new surroundings would also enable him to take his bearings and decide upon the best locality in which to rent a house. So at the end of August, 1853, Wilson embarked alone on the *City of Manchester,* sailing from Liverpool to Philadelphia.

Ocean voyages were much more deliberate in those days. In a letter written on the ship when the end was in sight, he says that the voyage will have taken seventeen or eighteen days. At Philadelphia the meals in the hotel were to him, as to most Englishmen until a much later date, unusual experiences. He gives a full account of them in his journal.

> Breakfast is served at seven and eight, when the gong is sounded, dinner in like manner at one

and three, tea at half-past six. The table exhibits a profusion of strange meats. Among the novelties of the breakfast table are stewed potatoes, kidneys, tripe, scrambled eggs, a sweet preparation smelling like an omelet, minced fish, fish balls, egg-plant fried in slices and tasting something like a sugared oyster, sweet potatoes—but indeed everything is sweet, even the corned beef preserved with sugar instead of salt. For the dinner I might fill a page. Ice is used with everything. The natives drop it into their wine, they drop it into their tea and coffee, mix it in their hot puddings, eat it with their fruit.

He takes a walk with a ship acquaintance, a resident of Philadelphia:—

As we came home Professor Boye, who insisted on escorting me to my hotel, warned me to beware of my feet at a place where the paving was torn up, and loose boards lying about. "Remember", said he, "we have no police regulations here such as you have at home. Every man is expected to look after himself. If you break your leg in such a hole you may try your remedy at law against the owner of the adjoining house, but you will find it cheaper and better to do nothing". Such I can see is the regulating principle of a great many things here. "Every man for himself" is the country's motto; as to who was neighbour to him that fell among thieves, the question is by no means settled nor thought worth the trouble.

While Wilson remained in Philadelphia he received many flattering attentions from the *literati* of

the place. The fact that one of the professors in the University of Pennsylvania had been a fellow passenger and companion on the ship explains the publicity given to Wilson's arrival. He writes to his wife on the subject:

> I have had the pleasing surprise of finding myself not unknown here. My *Archaeology* is in the public libraries, and so I have had doctors and professors calling and leaving their cards for me at the hotel where I stay, and have had free access to every public institution I cared to see, have attended the meetings of the Historical Society of Philadelphia, and of the Academy of Natural Science. I am to be elected an honorary Fellow . . . To come to homelier themes however let me tell you of the table. I have been eating and drinking all manner of extraordinary things. Peaches are here more plentiful than apples at home, they are sold on the stalls at a cent each. Besides these there are water-melons, grapes, cantalopes, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, Indian corn—the ear eaten green with butter, etc. Then the bread includes all sorts never heard of on the European side of the Atlantic. The greatest fault is that everything is sweet, potatoes, bread, vegetables, and eaten with a profusion of butter. At the hotel here a fixed sum is charged—a dollar and a half per day, and that suffices for everything. The breakfast bell rings at 7 and 8 o'clock, the dinner at 1 and 3, tea at 6½, and then all sit down together. But the same is paid whether you come or not, so that the

hospitalities of friends have not lessened my expenses. It is much less however than I could have stayed for in any hotel in England or Scotland, as there is nothing for servants.

At Albany he is struck by

an odd mixture of a rough sea-faring character and a pleasant rustic nonchalance. Pigs run about the streets in abundance, but that I saw also both at Philadelphia and New York.

From Albany to Rochester he travelled by night train, but not in a sleeping-car, and his first impressions of America were deepened by experience of a railway accident. This is his account of it:

Between two and three in the morning we stopped at a place called Oneida, and were told that the cars waited here a quarter of an hour for refreshments. I had had nothing since midday the day before; I got out and took a cup of coffee. We then returned to our seats and I had just composed myself to sleep again, when crash! the whole carriage was a heap of ruins. I was jammed in between two seats, both my legs wedged in, while shrieks, groans and cries for help resounded and the most frightful confusion.

From a newspaper cutting which he inserts in his journal, we learn that the express, while still standing in the station, had been run into by a freight train from behind.

The car I was in was second last, but it suffered the most. The car behind it was thrown up behind

the buffers and came in upon us. My legs were caught below the knee and fixed between the seats which were driven together. Those who were more fortunate, following the natural though selfish instinct of self-preservation, came trampling over prostrate women and children. I saw at once that both my legs must be broken in another second, and seizing hold of a brass rail which runs along the inside of the carriage for light luggage I took advantage of the recoil of the carriage before it returned with a second crash, and swinging myself up I held there clear of danger; while the poor fellow who sat next to me, and who appeared to have lost his presence of mind, had both his legs broken. I can never witness anything more frightful. One man was literally cut in pieces not a yard from me, and as I hung on above this awful scene I expected every minute that the carriage, which swayed about, would fall over and finish us all. I was sufficiently hurt to be unable to assist anyone else. My right leg is considerably bruised and my left leg has two cuts across the shin, one of them an inch and a half long. The bleeding however appears to have prevented all bad consequences, and writing now, the fourth day after the accident, I walk with little lameness. My umbrella which lay beside me and was of course left behind when I swung myself up out of the wreck was broken in pieces, leaving no room to doubt what my fate must have been.

When he at length arrived in Rochester he found that the weekly or bi-weekly boat for Toronto had

gone. So he procured a new hat, for which he insisted that the railway Company should pay, and then took train for Niagara.

> I had to take the cars for Niagara, as the only way left for getting on to Toronto, but I can assure you I would have gone a hundred miles round to have found any other mode of conveyance . . . I find that I get credit for a degree of 'cuteness' which raises me a hundred per cent. in the estimation of some of my acquaintances here in Toronto, in consequence of my successful demand for compensation from the Railway Company. It seems compensation is never dreamt of by the Yankees without a lawsuit. I have met two of my fellow-passengers, both of whom sustained the loss of hats, etc., but never dreamt of demanding redress. So you see the benefit of travelling; a single week among the Yankees has quite sharpened me.

The early letters to his wife from Toronto contain some interesting comments on the appearance of the town.

> Of Toronto I shall give you my first impressions, liable of course to correction as my knowledge of it becomes more extended. It is a busy bustling town of nearly 40,000 inhabitants, and bearing such evident marks of rapid increase that I should not wonder if ten years hence it be found to number nearly a hundred thousand. The public buildings are creditable and really handsome. Some of them would be regarded as great ornaments if

erected in Edinburgh instead of this new-born city . . . There is a cathedral of really creditable architecture, a gaol large enough to hold, I hope, all the rogues however plentiful they be, St. Lawrence Hall, a building resembling the City Hall in Glasgow, an Upper Canada College corresponding to the High School of Edinburgh, and in this capacity subordinate to University College. Our College grounds are very fine and extensive, beautifully planted, the building the mere wing of a very large plan. . . Everything indicates wealth and prosperity. As to the shops, many of them are equal to the best in Edinburgh, and if a person has only money he need want for nothing here that he desires. . . I am told that the carrying out of a number of railways, now planned and in progress, has brought so many people suddenly to the place and so increased the demand for labour that the price of everything has risen. Houses are not to be had, workmen are striking for higher wages, board, lodging, and everything else are proportionately dear. Mrs. Hincks has engaged a servant at $5 a month which is just £12 a year.

The example he gives of the high cost of living in Toronto at that time does not seem very aptly chosen; indeed servants' wages were abnormally low by comparison with the cost of food. Wilson's professorial salary was £350 a year and he hoped to see it soon raised to £400.

I have told Dr. McCaul that if he hopes to retain us permanently he must endeavour to get it

raised to £500. He laughed, but said that was by no means impossible.

Wilson's impressions of Dr. McCaul* were not unfavourable, although he seems to have had an instinctive mistrust of him even from the first, which later experiences did nothing to mitigate.

> Tomorrow I dine with Dr. McCaul, a clever, lively, humorous Irishman. I suspect I shall have a battle to fight about my Chair. He wants to make it a Chair of Ancient History, being imbued with all the old scholastic preferences for everything classical, but I have not the slightest intention of being dictated to by any one as to what or how I shall teach. I shall not quarrel with him however, don't you fear that. He seems a shrewd fellow and a good scholar, very well fitted for his post.

This was written in September before the work of the College had begun. A little later he writes as follows:

> I have now entered so far on my professorial duties as to have engaged on two successive days in the matriculation examinations. These are managed with all becoming pomp and formality, and at the same time with a degree of strictness such

* John McCaul (1807-1886), born in Dublin, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, and a noted classical scholar. He took orders in 1833, and in 1839 came to Canada as Principal of Upper Canada College. In 1842 he was appointed Professor of Classics and Vice-President of King's College. When the first reorganization of King's College took place in 1849 he succeeded Strachan as President, and in 1853 was retained as President of University College in the second reorganization of the provincial university. He resigned from ill health in 1880.

as would rather frighten some of our Scottish students . . . The examining professor enters in full costume preceded by the College beadle bearing the mace, and is received by all the students standing uncovered. Dr. McCaul looks, I assure you, quite a magnificent fellow, having, in addition to his gown and square cap, his clerical bands and his scarlet hood as LL.D. of Trinity College, Dublin. I am afraid the custom of such "rags of popery" has so completely fallen under the ban of the Presbyterian successors of St. Rule that a St. Andrews LL.D. [Wilson himself] could not with any reasonable propriety superadd that to his other officialities . . .

Dr. McCaul, who has been a subject of curiosity to you, is a shrewd, clever, long-headed Irishman, a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, a college tutor and professor of some twenty-three years standing, and a bit of a martinet in all matters of College discipline. It is a high crime and misdemeanour to appear in College hours otherwise than in cap and gown. At one of my examinations I learned that I should only have three students present, and so was appearing in surtout and natural wig. Oh dear! that would never do. Back I had to go and don my officials. The College porter solemnly rang the bell for ten minutes, the College beadle then appeared in his gown with the mace over his shoulder to announce to me that the hour had come, and away I marched at his tail into the great hall, where one poor solitary student awaited my arrival! It cost me some difficulty to preserve

my gravity under my silk tassel. The Doctor however has better stuff in him and is really an able man and a good scholar. Dr. Beavan, an Oxford M.A., is a dreadful dry old stick; the rest of the professors are clever fellows as far as I can see, Professor Cherriman a Cambridge man, whom I expect to like, Dr. Forneri an Italian, an old campaigner with Napoleon, who escaped in the retreat from Moscow, amusingly simple, and much in need of a course of English, which I should be happy to exchange for some of his foreign tongues.

In another letter, written early in November, he goes into the questions of living conditions and expenses in Toronto.

The information we had as to the cheapness of living, house rent, etc., was true enough once but it is so no longer. Many people here think that the present dearness of everything is temporary, such rises having occurred before. Meanwhile we must reason on things as they are. Fuel, as I mentioned before, is fully as dear as it was in London, a most serious item, compared with Edinburgh prices, in a country where the winter is so severe. I can quite believe however what I am told, that notwithstanding the keenness of the winter less fuel is required than at home, and for this simple reason that the winter is no sooner over than warm weather sets in, and then all stoves and grates are useless for two-thirds of the year except for cooking, whereas at home you burn fires ten or eleven months in the year, or should do so for comfort.

In proof of this I have only had on a fire twice yet, and it is now the fifth of November and Indian Summer, and there have not been above three rainy days since I reached Toronto. In answer to your queries let me tell you that Mrs. Dunlop [with whom he had lodging] looks after my washing, so that I have no trouble. I made out one laundress's list and I would rather write another inaugural lecture than make out a second . . .

As to the place, people, and the duties of the College, I like them all. I am surprised how well I can adapt myself to this new place—new in every sense, plank roads, venerable stumps of the primeval forest still lingering in by-roads and streets, frame houses, shanties, etc., etc. The people are most kind and hospitable, indeed I have to fight against their kindness as I must stick to my work. The latter is hard enough, and will be all this winter, but I have really a fine set of students. I find also that I have something to communicate to them, and this being the case I go on with heart and good will. I like the work, and if I stay here I shall after a year or two find it both easy and pleasant. Next year however will be little less hard work than this, and even the third year still up-hill. Next year I shall have in the upper class the Junior Sophisters of this year. Consequently I must have new lectures and everything fresh for them. The system is one involving a vast deal more work to the professors than our plain-sailing Scottish system.

In further extracts from letters written during the winter he amplifies the impression made upon him by his associates and his surroundings.

Nov. 12 [1853]. My lecture day is round before I am ready for it, and I go on from Monday to Wednesday and from Wednesday to Friday fighting against time. Yesterday I think I gave decidedly the worst lecture I have delivered since I came here and the reason was sufficiently obvious to myself. I had to sit up till near two o'clock the night before getting it ready. It was quite impossible for me to write it out, I had to trust to the moment for the words. However they had a good lecture on Wednesday, and perhaps it appeared worse to me than to my auditors. I mean to write out at full length about every fourth lecture, keeping it in hand while I am preparing the notes for the others, and by this means I give the students a sort of specimen of written style occasionally. The others I write more or less, or not at all, as I may have time or the subject requires. The dearth of books here is something dreadful. In preparing nearly every lecture I remember books I wish to consult, passages that would be invaluable to me for extracts, but they cannot be had, not even a peep at them, and I have to get along accordingly, as best I can . . . I have given my students to understand in a quiet way that flint arrowheads, etc., are the best means of finding the way to my heart. So one of them, a son of the Hon. Robert Baldwin, brought me on Wednesday two ancient stone pipes, curiously carved, found

near Lake Simcoe in the north of the province—perfect treasures they are . . . I shall make quite a prehistoric Canadian museum if I stay here long enough. Did you see the reference to "Dr. Wilson, the Scotch Antiquary" in the *Athenaeum* of October 22nd, p. 1257? You see he is going to turn Canadian antiquary and nurse his old ruling passion in spite of the fates having cast him ashore on the margin of Lake Ontario and in a city that is not quite so old as himself . . . You want some news about myself. I will give you a little bit you cannot fail to understand. After one or two patient endurances of missing papers, or at the worst very moderate complaining, I at length, one morning lately, summoned the girl who responds to the magnificent title of Priscilla, and told her my table was never to be meddled with, no paper touched or book lifted, no matter what amount of dust she might see; that I would borrow a duster occasionally and put it to rights myself. I think that will bring the old fellow to your mind.

* * * *

You ask how I stand as regards years with the professors. Professor Chapman and I are certainly the youngest. Professor Cherriman of the Natural Philosophy Chair is not much our senior, and a bachelor. Next is Dr. Croft the chemist, Mr. Buckland, of Agriculture, and then I should place our Principal, Dr. McCaul, a man still in full vigour, I suppose a little above fifty. Professor Hincks is his senior, and Dr. Beavan, a stupid dry old stick that we would be well rid of. Dr. For-

Daniel Wilson with his younger daughter, *circa* 1854

*(From a daguerrotype)*

neri I have already told you of. As he was a soldier, doing manful deeds at the retreat from Moscow, three years before I was born, you will not need to be told that he is somewhat my senior. Mr. Hirschfelder, a Christianized Jew, professor of Oriental Literature, is a keen florist. I am on friendly terms with them all, even dry old Dr. Beavan, though I make my fun of him somewhat more than the old gentleman would at all approve of, did he know it all. Papa must have some fun however, as little Jane knows, in spite of the grave rebukes of his sober wife.

* * * *

Your last letter contains a long list of questions which it may be well to reply to forthwith. You ask what professors of my own standing are doing for houses. You shall hear. Dr. Forneri, having a very large family, has got the whole temporarily packed away in a very small cottage, where stowage must be conducted on some patent American or Italian principle, unless they sleep only one half at a time like ship watches. Mr. Hincks, full of schemes for establishing a ladies' college here, considered himself especially fortunate in stumbling on a large furnished house the owner of which was going to Europe. His ladies' college scheme, however, is I suspect knocked on the head and so he must now be repenting of his bargain. As to Professor Chapman, he thought himself particularly lucky in getting a house at Yorkville just suited to him, he having brought with him Mrs. Chapman and his little boy. Meanwhile he took lodg-

ings, very so-so ones, just till his things should be forwarded from Quebec as he believed. The present fate of these you know. [They were left behind on the dock at Liverpool.] Meanwhile the navigation of the St. Lawrence is closed till next spring, the river being now frozen up at Quebec, and so he must pass the winter in lodgings and pay for his house without being able to occupy it.

* * * *

Our Librarian is a fastidious, fretful, touchy martinet. He quarrels with the students, lodges complaints against them with the Principal, and declares them the most ill-conducted and unmanageable set of fellows ever heard of. They retaliate upon him with all manner of tricks and keep the poor man in perpetual hot water. My own experience of the same young men is that I could not possibly desire a more respectful or gentlemanly set of students. Their only breach of College etiquette with me has been the occasional greeting of me with a hearty ruff with their feet on occasions when a lecture chanced to please them more than usual—a breach of discipline which I have not deemed it my duty heretofore to complain of to the Principal. I don't think Dr. Beavan ever had an opportunity of doing so, or he certainly would.

* * * *

I entertained my students to tea. My College janitor, a very nice obliging fellow, came and acted as my waiter. I feel well assured the young gentlemen will not get on a bit the worse with me or

treat me with the less respect for the pleasant evening they spent with me. I have promised to help them in getting up a debating society—which they have not had as yet—and have engaged to take the chair at the first meeting.

A fortnight later he refers again to the debating society.

I have been engaged this week in helping the students to constitute a College Literary and Debating Society, and mediating between them and Dr. McCaul, who had very nearly knocked the whole on the head by some of his stupid martinet interference, just for the pleasure of exercising a little brief authority. Now however the young gentlemen are fair set a-going, in high spirits, and likely to work well together. The result I anticipate will be to give them a fresh and more lasting interest in the College, a thing greatly needed here.

The Society thus called into existence through Wilson's aid was the Literary and Scientific Society, familiarly known as the "Lit", which fulfilled for many years the intention of its founders and of Wilson in being the centre of all undergraduate social activity; with a significant change of name it still exists as the Literary and Athletic Society. It is evident that Wilson, with his Edinburgh experience of students' societies and his active participation in them, was the very man to co-operate with the students to this end.

The letters came to an end with the arrival in Toronto in the early summer of 1854 of Mrs. Wilson and her two young daughters. A house was found in what was then the village of Yorkville, on the south side of Bloor Street at the west corner of Huntley Street. The house is still in existence, a little altered. In those days there were but a few scattered cottages on the north side of the street, and from his house Wilson looked into the ravine and over it to the woods beyond. At the top of Sherbourne Street on the edge of the ravine there stood then an old blockhouse, built originally for defence against hostile Indians who might be approaching Toronto from the Don Valley by way of the subsidiary ravine. Among the sketches made by Wilson in those early years is one of the blockhouse. A reproduction is given in this volume, opposite to page 80. A daguerrotype, taken soon after the arrival of the family in Toronto, of Wilson and the younger of his two daughters, is reproduced opposite to page 64.

# CHAPTER III

## PROFESSOR IN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

THE institution in which Wilson was now enrolled as Professor of History and English Literature owed its existence to a Royal charter secured in 1827 by the Reverend Dr. Strachan*, afterwards the first Bishop of Toronto, for a university to be called the University of King's College. An endowment of Crown lands had been already appropriated for the purposes of higher education in the province, and from this endowment the new university was to be maintained. But the charter contemplated a college under Church of England control, with the Bishop as Visitor and none but members of the Church of England eligible for Chairs. These original provisions were modified by the Legislature in 1837, but virtual control by the Anglican

* John Strachan (1778-1867), a native of Scotland, educated at the Universities of Aberdeen and St. Andrew's. In 1799 he came to Canada and taught in a school at Kingston. In 1803 he took orders in the Church of England and in 1812 became rector of York (the original name of Toronto), in 1825 Archdeacon, and in 1839 first bishop of the newly created diocese of Toronto. In 1827 he obtained a charter for King's College and was appointed its President, withdrawing from all connection with the institution in 1849 when the Church of England control of the college was taken away by the Legislature. In 1851 he founded a new Church of England university, Trinity College, and became its first Chancellor.

Church remained. The formal opening did not take place until 1843, and by that time the antagonism of other religious denominations to this privileged position of the Church of England in relation to higher education had led to the establishment of three other colleges, one Presbyterian, at Kingston, another Methodist, at Cobourg, and a third Roman Catholic, also at Cobourg. These rivals to King's College depended for their maintenance entirely upon the generosity of the members of their respective denominations. The manifest unfairness of the college of one denomination appropriating the State endowment, while those of others, no less influential in point of numbers, were excluded from a share in it, soon led to renewed interference by the Legislature.

In 1849 the organization and constitution of King's College were entirely changed, and the name University of Toronto was first applied to the remodelled university, which, together with its endowment, was removed from all ecclesiastical control or supervision. In addition to the Faculty of Arts, Faculties of Medicine and Law were created, but the Faculty of Divinity was abolished and the power of conferring degrees in Divinity taken away. Reorganization, however, came too late. The colleges already established at Kingston and Cobourg declined to be extinguished; indeed, a fourth was soon after added, when Trinity College was founded by the

Anglican body. At the same time there began to be manifested on the part of some sections of the public a distinct hostility to the idea of secularized education by the State. Objection was also taken to State support of medical and legal education. Accordingly, in 1853, a new experiment in conciliation was tried, which lasted till 1887. The State institution was split in two, one part the University of Toronto, an examining and degree-conferring corporation after the pattern of the University of London, the other University College, an Arts college with a complete teaching Faculty, but without the power to confer degrees, and submitting its students for examination and degrees to the University of Toronto.

The expectation of the sponsors of this new measure was that the denominational colleges would be induced to affiliate with the University, and, while sharing with University College the responsibility for Arts teaching, would accept the University's examinations, which would thus become the standard of higher education for the whole province. The only concession to the claims of the denominational colleges for a share in the endowment was a provision that any surplus of income over the annual expenditure of University College and the University should be distributed among them instead of being added to capital as heretofore. This attempt at union failed, and the denominational colleges

maintained their separate autonomy in every respect, uniting only to attack the State institution and demand a portion of its endowment.

The organization of University College with a complete Faculty necessitated new appointments, of which Wilson's was one. The others were those of Cherriman as professor of Mathematics, Hincks as professor of Natural History, Chapman as professor of Mineralogy and Geology, and Forneri as professor of Modern Languages. The remaining members of the professoriate, McCaul, Beavan, and Croft, had already been on the Faculty of the superseded University, occupying Chairs of similar character to those they now held. With Cherriman, Croft and Chapman Wilson's relations were always friendly and usually sympathetic. For Forneri, Hincks and Beavan he had no very strong feeling, either of like or dislike. But from McCaul, the President of University College, he seems to have held aloof, even from the first. On many questions of policy and practice he found himself opposed to the head of his College, and not infrequently on these occasions he himself received the support of a majority of his colleagues.

Of the first twenty years of Wilson's life in his new surroundings no connected narrative can be given. Details are for the most part lacking, for the journal which he kept regularly during the latter part of his life was very fragmentary until the early

seventies, and letters that he may have written to his mother and brother in Edinburgh have not survived. But from other sources we can form some notion of his activities. When the first pressure of writing lectures had passed he turned his attention again to archaeological subjects and even to pure literature. The *Canadian Journal* was the organ and publication of the Canadian Institute, and Wilson became its editor in 1858 in succession to Professor Hind. After four years he in turn was succeeded by Professor Chapman. From the time of his first election as a member of the Institute in 1854 down almost to the last year of his life he was a frequent contributor of papers on archaeology and anthropology, and while editor of the Journal he also furnished reviews of literary works, among others of Longfellow's *Hiawatha* and Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass;* particular mention may likewise be made of his sympathetic article on Paul Kane, the painter of Indian types.

During those years he was busy collecting the material for his second great archaeological book, *Prehistoric Man,* which was published in 1862. The subject was the Red man as he exists at the present day, or rather as he did still exist in the middle of the nineteenth century, in contact with civilization but as yet unaffected or but slightly affected by it, preserving unchanged his immemorial customs, traditions and myths, a living example of man as he must

have existed in many another country before the dawn of history. In preparation for writing this book Wilson had spent more than one summer vacation in camping-out expeditions to the north of Lake Superior, which before 1870 was far beyond the outposts of Canadian civilization, as well as in journeys to the country of the mound-builders in Ohio and to other American sites. The illustration opposite to page 96 is taken from one of the sketches made by him during these journeys into what was then the wilds of Canada.

After *Prehistoric Man* his writings, except the papers contributed to the Canadian Institute's Journal, were on purely literary subjects. In 1869 he published a Life of Chatterton, the precocious genius who committed suicide under pressure of want and in despair at the lack of appreciation, and the book is still the best monograph upon that unfortunate youth. In 1873 Wilson joined the large army of writers on Shakespeare with his *Caliban*. It is a discussion of Shakespeare's creative imagination as exercised on the supernatural, from the half-demon Caliban of *Tempest* to the somewhat irresponsible, if beneficent, fairies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In this book again he has the field to himself. In 1875 a volume of poems appeared entitled *Spring Wild Flowers*. It was, however, not a new work, but a reissue of an old collec-

tion privately printed thirty years before; he refers to it in the extract from his journal already quoted (see p. 42 *ante*). Being a collection of serious verse it is hardly as characteristic of the author as the many fugitive *jeux-d'esprit* which came so easily from his pen at all times. Wilson's facility, while an advantage in satirical or humorous poems, was rather a snare to him when he wished to express his deepest sentiments and emotions; he became rhetorical and redundant when his subject called rather for restraint and the vital phrase. Humorous poems he was accustomed to dash off with little trouble and on all sorts of subjects. Current events in Edinburgh, which he watched with unfailing interest from Toronto, sometimes exercised his satirical muse. These would be sent to the *Scotsman*, or privately to some Edinburgh friend. His early historical work on Edinburgh, which had long been out of print, was republished with omissions and corrections. This was not done at his own desire but as a defensive act against a piratical Edinburgh publisher who had purchased plates of the original edition and in 1872 proposed to reissue it. The passage in his journal alluding to the proposal has been quoted on page 44. The new edition was brought out in 1878 by a different publisher, of Wilson's own choice, with the title *Reminiscences of old Edinburgh.*

Meanwhile the University of Toronto was not

standing still, nor yet pursuing a peaceful course. The building known as King's College, of which one wing only had been completed, was in occupation by University College at the time of Wilson's arrival in 1853, but it proved quite inadequate to the requirements of the College, and was in many ways unsuitable. A movement soon began for the erection of a building on another site. The chief advocate of this course was the Vice-Chancellor, John Langton, who had the valuable support of the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Edmund Head, as Visitor, and the not less valuable, if less weighty, encouragement of the majority of the University College Faculty. The history of the erection of the fine building, still the home of University College, and of the difficulties under which the project was carried out, is part of the history of the University, and may be read in other publications.* Wilson's sympathetic adhesion took the form of artistic interest in the design. The quasi-gothic style, with the abundant carved ornament, was entirely to his taste. He was on most friendly terms with Mr. Cumberland the architect, and supplied him with drawings of gargoyles and other carvings, copied or imitated from his drawings, already mentioned, of such things in the buildings of old Edinburgh. Two important features in the façade

* See especially *Early Letters from Canada, the letters of John Langton*, pp 277-297. (Toronto: MacMillan, 1927)

of University College were claimed by Wilson in later years as his own additions to the original design. These are the three finials on the corners of the great tower which balance the turret at the fourth (north-east) corner, and the large double-light window in the tower, with the rich and elaborate ornament surrounding it. If the tower be imagined without these two salient features it will be felt at once how strong and full of character they are, and how essentially right was Wilson's artistic feeling when he imposed the three finials on the original flat top and substituted a large ornate window for the architect's more modest design. The architect's original south elevation has not survived but Wilson's own statement on the subject was explicit, and there can be no reasonable doubt that the architect accepted Wilson's drawings in these particulars in preference to his own.*

The new University College building was completed in 1856, and almost at once a newspaper and pamphlet attack began on the part of representatives of the rival denominational colleges, who saw their hopes of dividing the surplus of income beyond the requirements of University College disappear before

*The architect's working drawings, signed by the contractor, prove that the present tower with its finials was an afterthought. The east and west elevations of the central part of the building, into which the tower enters only as a background, show the tower without the finials. The south elevation in which the finials and the double-light window appear is numbered towards the end of the series of drawings signed by the contractor, while the other two elevations have numbers near the beginning. This of itself implies the cancellation of an earlier drawing of the south front.

this large investment of capital in buildings. Charges of waste and extravagance were made, and eventually a special committee of Parliament was appointed to hear evidence. To state the case for the University there appeared before the committee the Vice-Chancellor, Langton, representing the University Senate, and Dr. Wilson as spokesman for the Council of University College. It is significant that the latter body was not represented, as might have been assumed, by McCaul, the President of University College. But, rightly or wrongly, it was felt by the majority of the members of the Council that the President was too much in sympathy with his old King's College friends, now championing the claims of Trinity College, for him to be an effective defender of the rights of University College; so Wilson was formally elected to represent the College Council before the legislative committee. The evidence was given, the witnesses were questioned, and argument was heard, but no report was ever made, and the complaints were for the present dropped. Wilson's journal supplies his comment on the whole transaction, written ten years later as a note or an aside to the list of his published writings.

> And yet the list of publications would be incomplete if I omitted to notice the
>
> "Address before the select committee of the Legislative Assembly appointed to inquire into the

management of the University of Toronto, in opening the defence on behalf of University College, by Daniel Wilson, LL.D., Professor, etc. Toronto 1860."

And in relation to the same warfare:—

"University Question: the statement of John Langton, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Toronto, and Professor Daniel Wilson, LL.D., of University College, Toronto, with notes and extracts from the evidence taken before the Committee of the Legislative Assembly on the University. Toronto, 1860."

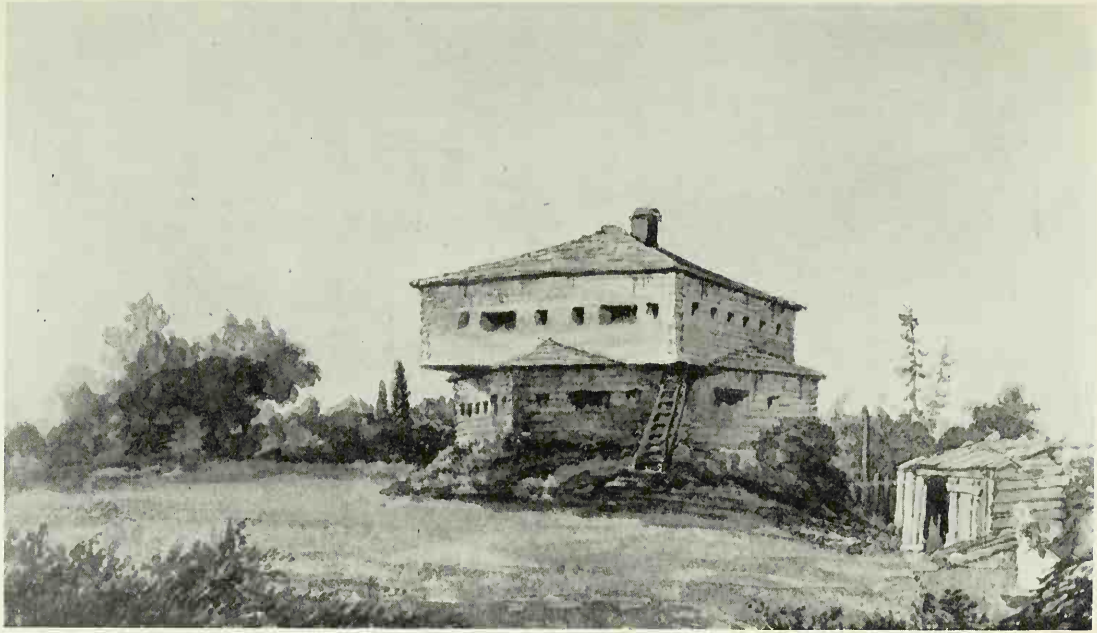
These are memorials of a Canadian warfare which lasted for years. On one side were marshalled the Wesleyan Methodists led by the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, D.D.,* the Auld Kirk Presbyterians, latterly under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Leitch, the High Church Episcopalians, and the Roman Catholics, all aiming at the destruction of the "Godless University and College" that they might divide the spoils; and so fully impressed with their own pious graces and virtuous aims that they stuck at no slander, falsehood or knavish chicanery to accomplish their end. The *Christian Guardian,* the Methodist organ, indulged in such misrepresentations and personalities and insinuations as only a religious newspaper is equal to. I for my part, having great faith in the power of the

* Egerton Ryerson (1803-1882) was born in Canada of United Empire Loyalist parents. In 1825 he entered the ministry of the Methodist Church, in 1829 became editor of the *Christian Guardian,* the organ of the Wesleyan Methodist body, and in 1841 was appointed President of Victoria College, Cobourg. But he resigned in 1844 to become Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, which position he retained until 1876.

Press, and no difficulty in finding 'organs' at my service, made free use of my pen, both in prose and rhyme; and I rather think that more than one of our opponents, and some who pretended to be friends, had quite enough of it before the 'University Question' was settled and the scheme of sectarian spoliation knocked on the head.

A more annoying and distasteful controversy could not well be conceived, conducted as it was with an amount of vulgar personality inconceivable to educated men at home. At first I was simply disgusted with the whole business, but being compelled to go into it I plucked up heart of grace and found some grim satisfaction in mauling the unscrupulous assailants of our College militant, and seeing the pack turn tail at last and scuttle off ignominiously with their tails between their legs.

The impression of this controversy upon Wilson's mind was lasting, and coloured his view of the much later negotiations with the denominational colleges which led to the Federation Act of 1887, as will be seen from the extracts from his journal of that period. The really critical position in which the University found itself at the earlier date was due, not so much to the open claims of the other colleges or to the arguments adduced in support of them, as to the political influence which the denominations were able to exert. The attack in the committee of the Legislature had failed. The logic of the situation was entirely with the University of Toronto. Either the



Blockhouse, Yorkville, taken down in 1865

*(From a water-colour sketch by Daniel Wilson)*

State system of undenominational higher education was justifiable, in which case there was no excuse for dissipating an endowment by no means excessive, created for that very purpose, or it was not justifiable, and therefore the University and University College were unnecessary and even injurious to the moral welfare of the community. In the face of a large body of public opinion favourable to secularized education the advocates of the denominational colleges did not venture to press the second alternative, and they could not upset the plain statement of facts and figures advanced in support of the first. The legislative committee, as has been said above, tacitly decided in favour of the University's contention. But it is probable that denominational influence was exerted to prevent the committee from bringing in a decisive report in that sense. The complaint was dropped, the committee made no report at all, and so the question was supposed to remain unsettled by any authoritative pronouncement.

The next move in the campaign against the State institution was to bring denominational influence to bear within the University itself. The Act which reorganized the University and created University College had made liberal provision for representation on the University Senate of the denominational colleges which, it was expected, would be in-

duced to enter the system as affiliated colleges. It was not difficult for a combination of denominational interests to acquire virtual control of the Senate and to elect as Vice-Chancellor, *ex-officio* the chairman of the Senate, one who sympathized with their objects. The new Vice-Chancellor assented to, or perhaps advised, the appointment of a Royal commission to make recommendations on the basis of the evidence submitted to the legislative committee, and that commission when appointed was found to be composed of one representative from each of the two complainant colleges, with the new Vice-Chancellor, sympathetic to their claims, to represent the University. With entire unanimity the commission recommended a partition of the endowment.

At this critical juncture in the fortunes of the University there came to the front in its defence two young graduates, both closely associated with its administration in later years. Edward Blake,* after-

* Edward Blake (1833-1912) was distinguished very early in his career as a public speaker. He entered political life in 1867 as a member both of the Dominion Parliament and of the Ontario Legislature. In the latter he was leader of the Liberal opposition, and on the defeat of the Conservative Government in 1871 he became Prime Minister. In 1872, when dual representation in a provincial legislature and in the federal Parliament was abolished, he withdrew from provincial politics and continued to hold his seat in the House of Commons at Ottawa. He was a Minister of the Crown in 1873 and again from 1875 to 1878 under Alexander Mackenzie's leadership. From 1879 he was in opposition, but in 1890 he resigned his seat and withdrew from Canadian politics. He had been elected Chancellor of the University of Toronto in 1873 and continued to hold that position until 1900, but it was mainly in the years 1890 to 1892 that he made his influence and authority felt in University affairs. In the latter year he accepted an invitation to represent an Irish constituency in the Imperial Parliament and virtually made London his home for the rest of his active life. He died in 1912 in Toronto where he had been living in retirement since 1907.

wards a leader in Canadian political life and Chancellor of the University for many years, and Adam Crooks,* Minister of Education for the Province of Ontario from 1876 to 1883, had recently been appointed members of the Senate of the University in pursuance of the Government's policy to give the alumni some voice in its affairs. A public meeting was called and addressed by these two able and energetic young men, and resolutions were passed condemning the proposed spoliation of the State University. With this expression of public opinion behind him Crooks was then able to carry similar resolutions in the University Senate. The Vice-Chancellor no longer commanded the support of the majority, and was superseded at the next election of a Vice-Chancellor by Crooks himself. The denominational colleges were effectively defeated and their claims to a share in the endowment remained dormant for many years. It was this insidious movement within the governing body of the University that Wilson alludes to when he speaks of "some who pretended to be friends". These four or five years of incessant controversy and struggle made a deep impression upon him, and he

* Adam Crooks (1827-1885) was thirty-six years of age at the time of his vigorous defence of the University. He entered political life in 1871 as a member of the legislature of the province of Ontario. He was a member of the Cabinet from the time of his election, first as Attorney General during the premiership of Edward Blake, then as Provincial Treasurer when Mowat succeeded Blake as leader of the Government in 1872, and from 1876 as Minister of Education. After a break-down in health he retired from office and from public life in 1883.

never relaxed his vigilance against similar attempts to undermine the position of the University as the one and only institution of higher education entitled to the financial support of the provincial Government.

The Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, had been a leader in the attack on the provincial University, and it was his assaults that Wilson had found most obnoxious and had been most at pains to repel. Ryerson continued to rule the school system of the province until 1876, but early in the seventies it became obvious that a change must soon be made. Mr., afterwards Sir Oliver, Mowat* was the head of the new Liberal government in what had become in 1867 the province of Ontario. He was commonly referred to, not as Premier or Prime Minister, but as the Attorney General, from the ministry of which he took charge during the whole long period in which he was at the head of the Government. Wilson in his journal follows the common practice and calls him consistently the Attorney General. Mr. Mowat was

* Oliver Mowat (1820-1903) entered political life in 1857. He was a member of the Government of the Province of Canada from 1858 to 1864, and took part in the Quebec Conference which paved the way for Confederation. He accepted a judgeship in 1865 but resigned and returned to politics in 1872, on the withdrawal of Edward Blake from the provincial legislature, taking over from him the premiership. He remained at the head of the Government of Ontario until 1896, when he joined the newly formed administration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier at Ottawa. But he retired altogether from political life in 1897 and became Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, which position he occupied until his death in 1903. He was knighted in 1892.

looking for a successor to Ryerson, now an old man, and he was ready to make the new head of the Department of Education an active political member of the Government with Cabinet rank. During his administration there were two outstanding educationists in the province, both with fine debating gifts, and it is interesting to find that on different occasions Mr. Mowat offered each of them the portfolio of Education in the Government. One of them was Principal Grant* of Queen's University, Kingston, who refused the portfolio in 1887, but the much earlier choice of Mr. Mowat was Wilson. The first probable allusion to the offer made to the latter occurs in his journal under date January 16, 1873. Wilson there notes that he wrote to his sister, Mrs. James Sime, suggesting that her husband might like to be a candidate for a Chair in Toronto "in case a certain vacancy arose", and on February 20 he again speaks of his proposal to Sime "of possible succession to my Chair". There is no further reference to the matter until July 22 when his journal has the following entry:

> 'There's many a slip twixt cup and lip' and one happens to-day. Old E. changes his mind, and so I don't change my place. Happily it is rather a relief than otherwise, so far as I am concerned.

* George Monro Grant (1835-1902), a native of Nova Scotia, entered the ministry of the Presbyterian Church, and became Principal of Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, in 1877, retaining the position till his death.

Duty to others could alone make me court the change.

Evidently "old E." means Egerton Ryerson. Two years later the subject came up again. On June 21, 1875, he writes:

Among a pile of letters awaiting me is one from the Attorney General specially desiring to see me. Waited on him, and received the formal offer that I should resign my professorship, enter into politics, and accept the office of Minister of Public Instruction, with a seat in the Cabinet, and a guarantee that, in case of the ministry coming to the usual end of all ministries, I shall have my choice of two suitable permanent offices named to me. Agreed to give the matter mature consideration before replying, though more from a becoming courtesy in response to such an offer than from much doubt as to my decision.

The sequel is on June 25:

Waited on the Attorney General and stated to him my decision. I could not accept the office of Minister of Public Instruction, reserving the reversion of one or other of the two offices worth $4000 per annum placed at my option, without risking the chances of finding myself placed in a very invidious position in which I should imperil my independence and self-respect. No man who is not sufficiently independent of all pecuniary temptations to be able at any time to boldly face an adverse vote, whatever may be the consequences, should enter on public life.

We can only conjecture the cause of his change of attitude between January 1873 and June 1875. At the former date he was apparently not indisposed to entertain the idea of a political career, going so far indeed as to take the first step towards finding a successor to himself in University College. Two and a half years later he has no hesitation. He does not want a political career, but the reason he gave cannot be that which really prompted his refusal, because it obviously fails to meet the terms of the proposal made to him. To a professor with the salary of $2500 the certain reversion of an office worth $4000 a year was surely a sufficient pecuniary compensation for the loss of a ministry which at that time was remunerated with $3200. Perhaps the lapse of two and a half years may itself be an explanation of his change of mind. He was just so much older, in his sixtieth year in fact, and he may have felt a stronger disinclination to alter his way of life. The President of University College, Dr. McCaul, was also so much older, and infirmities were increasing upon him, and Wilson may have realized that within a few years he might himself be offered the presidency of the College in succession to McCaul. That was a possibility which he may well have had in view when he declined Mr. Mowat's complimentary invitation to enter politics.

But Dr. McCaul's resignation did not take place

for five years more, and in the meantime another offer came to Wilson. His own journal entry gives a full account:

May 3, 1877. A visit from the Lord Bishop of Huron. He is about to establish a Protestant university with a Church of England evangelical theological Faculty at London, C.W., and the object of his visit is to offer me the headship: Provost and Vice-chancellor, salary $3000—or more if I insist, and residence with gas, fuel, etc. I have undertaken to give it deliberate consideration, but rather out of courtesy to him, than from any hesitation on my part. I do not believe in denominational colleges other than theological. Orthodox science is generally another name for shallow bigotry.

May 4. Answered the letter of Bishop Hellmuth declining with all courtesy his offer:

My dear Lord Bishop—

As I now see my way clearly to the answer I must give you in reference to the very important proposition which you have done me the honour to submit to me, it is only just that I should reply without delay.

I highly appreciate the great importance of the movement you have in view for the establishment of a university including a theological Faculty of our own Church, thoroughly evangelical in its teaching and exercising a high-toned Christian influence over the whole training of the College. If such results can be accomplished every lover of

the truth must most heartily wish you Godspeed. But I doubt the success in relation to the highest aims; and I have no doubt on this point, that I am not the man under whose guidance success is to be looked for.

I need not assure you of my sympathy in reference to all that pertains to the clear setting forth of evangelical truth, for I have battled for that through evil as well as good report in a tolerably unmistakable manner. But I must also inform you that I no less strongly desire to see the untrammeled freedom of scientific and philosophical research. Truth has nothing to fear in the long run from the researches of such men as Darwin and Huxley. I think it suffers far more from the shackles with which orthodox zeal would hamper inquiry with the most honest intentions.

One of the grand blessings of the Reformation was the emancipation of the human mind from ecclesiastical authority, and the leaving it absolutely free in the exercise of private judgment and of the most unrestrained search into all truth. Unquestionably Hume and Mill and many another sceptic have had full liberty to set forth errors which an orthodox censorship would have prevented. But truth is [not] the loser in the long run. Truth has everything to gain from the most absolute freedom of inquiry.

I have advocated this at all times. I did it before the Canadian parliament at Quebec in 1860, and when asked to prepare a paper for the Evangelical Alliance at Montreal in 1874 I did the very

same, warning Christian men against being unfaithful to that grand keystone of the Reformation, the absolute right of every seeker after truth to the most untrammeled freedom of inquiry. Holding these opinions I conscientiously prefer such a system as that of the University of Toronto to any denominational institution. The pecuniary inducements which you offer are considerably more than I enjoy at present. But if they were much greater they would exercise no influence on my decision.

I have been thus clear and explicit, feeling that it is the best return I can make for the very great confidence you have reposed in me, in making an offer to me which I esteem as a singular honour even while forced to decline it.

This letter shows the strength of Wilson's conviction that higher education at least must be free from the embarrassment of ecclesiastical control, and in his mind it was a corollary that the State alone could be so disinterested and unaffected by extraneous considerations as to undertake the maintenance of university education in its widest sense.

In the affairs of the University there was comparative quiet during the years from 1870 to 1880. It was not a time of rapid growth, and the denominational colleges had for the present accepted their earlier defeat and made no more attacks upon the State college. The demand for higher education of women was beginning, and the recognition by the

University of the claims of the weaker sex took the form of extra-mural lectures to women. Wilson readily supported the movement, and on December 10, 1873, he makes the following sympathetic reference in his journal:

> First examination in "Higher Education for Ladies". There is a kind of emotional response in a female audience when characterized by intelligence and refinement which is singularly calculated to call forth the very best efforts of the lecturer. Without any demonstrative expressions of sympathy one seems to feel himself *en rapport* with his audience very differently from that of a male assembly; partly, no doubt, because he appeals with confidence to emotions and sympathies less easily reached with the other sex. After some uphill work this "Higher Education" movement gives fair promise of success.

A little later comes an interesting entry which shows how influential Wilson had become with Mr. Mowat, and also how vigilant he was to see that the University's interests were not neglected in any department, however remote from his own:

> April 21, 1874. Interview with the Attorney General about filling up the Natural History chair, vacant by the resignation of my young friend H. A. Nicholson, whose loss I deplore. [He had accepted a call from the University of Aberdeen.] Learnt to my surprise that C. had been recommending the abolition of the Chair and the Presi-

dent working like a mole underground. I hope they are circumvented. Chair vacancy to be advertised forthwith.

Another instance of his activity in the general educational work of the province occurs a year later:

May 20, 1875. Yesterday at the Council of Public Instruction. Things carried on by the C.S. [Chief Superintendent, Dr. Ryerson] in his most offensive fashion. Wrote to-day to Mr. A. MacMurchy giving him timely notice that I shall not again allow myself to be elected a member [presumably as a representative of the High School teachers]. I have been half killed with committees, correspondence, writing long reports, etc., etc. Worse than thankless work.

Among Wilson's semi-official duties was one which he thoroughly enjoyed, that of examining and reporting upon the occasional discoveries of Indian remains in the province. In most of these instances an ordinary Indian grave or rubbish-heap had been revealed, containing nothing to distinguish it from hundreds of similar discoveries. But in the autumn of 1876 Wilson was called upon to report upon the alleged discovery of the grave of Tecumseh, the Indian chief who fell during the invasion of Upper Canada by American troops in 1813. The supposed resting-place of the hero was revealed to local antiquarians by a couple of Indians who professed, apparently, to have received a tradition to that effect.

The grave was carefully protected, and Wilson was asked by the provincial government to examine it and pronounce upon the authenticity of the remains as far as his special knowledge would enable him to do so. What followed may be given in his own words.

> I never doubted that they had found, as they reported, a nearly complete skeleton lying in its natural position undisturbed. Here is an Indian male skull, but no under jaw; two pelvic bones—*ossa innominata*—but both for the same side, and one female! A leg-bone of a deer, a rib of a dog, etc. It certainly is not Tecumseh's skeleton, for it is nobody's. But I owe the old chief a pleasant quest, and could scarcely have satisfied the Attorney General by a mere inspection of the bones, as I have now done in an ample report.

During the same year, 1876, he was instrumental in rescuing from private hands a venerable Scottish relic, the Quigrich, or bishop's crook, said to have belonged to Saint Fillan. Wilson's journal tells the story:

> Dec. 5, 1876. Letter from Dr. John Stuart enclosing draught for £100 sterling with authority to secure the Quigrich for the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. I have had the fine old Bannockburn relic in view for years. £500 sterling was the least sum named for it at starting. Now I hope to secure it for $500. I daresay a good many Canadians will think that "a fool and his money are soon

parted". I have been in dread lest Barnum should hear of it. If he only knew its history the relic would have been secured by him long ago. If once I had it I shall be anxious till it is safe in Scotland. There it will be estimated at its true worth. Dr. Stuart's £100 stg. draught realizes only $482.22 by present exchange. But I have written to Alex. Dewar, the custodian of the Quigrich, offering him the promised $500 and hope that all will be satisfactorily settled.

Jany. 8, 1877. This day drew a cheque for $500 in favour of Archibald Dewar, son and heir of Alex. Dewar, the venerable custodian of the Quigrich or Crook of St. Fillan, which Robert the Bruce is believed to have had in his tent on the eve of the battle of Bannockburn, and to have given in keeping to the ancestor of this Canadian farmer, now a venerable patriarch in his 87th year. And so here is the choice national relic in my custody, preparatory to its restoration to Scotland after an interval of 59 years. The Bell of St. Fillan has preceded it, after an exile among the Southrons of still longer duration. There is something singularly interesting—especially under other skies and in a new world—to handle this relic of the primitive missionaries by whom the Christian faith was first taught to the pagan Highlanders of Perthshire, and which there is very credible evidence was an object of veneration to the greatest of our Scottish kings.

On February 22 he records the arrival of a letter announcing that the Quigrich is safe in Scotland. In

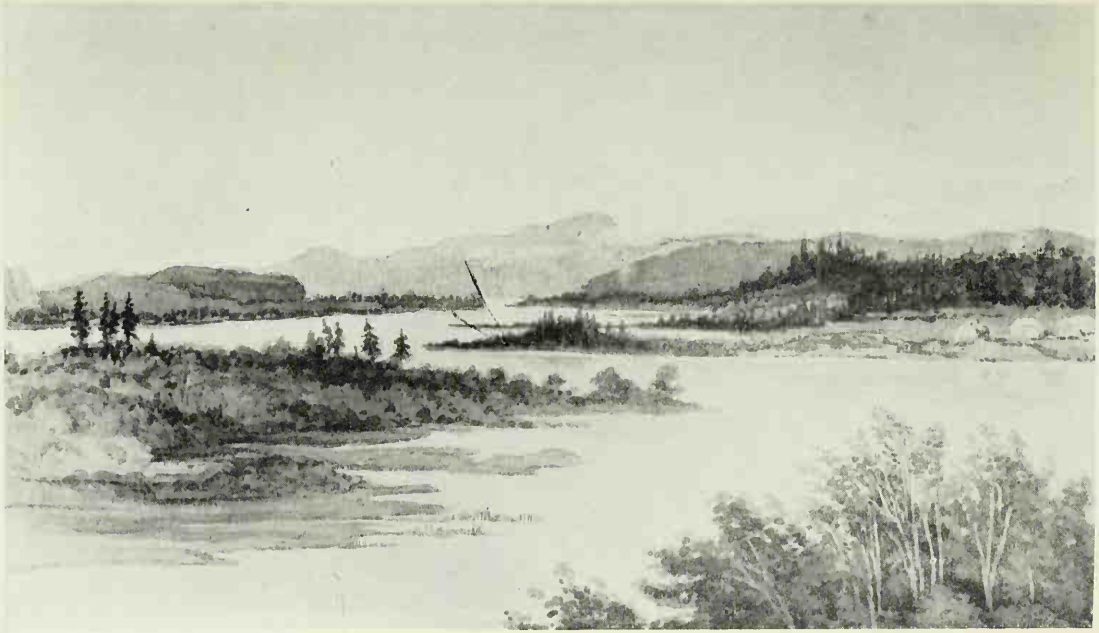
view of the exceptional interest of the relic to a Scottish antiquarian like Wilson it is remarkable that there are not earlier entries in his journal on the subject. He says that he had known of its whereabouts for years and that his first attempts to buy it were fruitless because of too high a price being asked by the farmer who had inherited it. It might have been supposed that such attempts, and the failure of them, would have been noted in a journal apparently kept for his own use. On the contrary he avoids all mention of the Quigrich until he can relate a successful negotiation. There is, however, a much later reference to the Quigrich in Wilson's journal which reveals the fact that the existence of the historic relic in Canada had been known to him before he himself came to the country.

> May 10, 1889. Met also [at a meeting of the Royal Society of Canada] Father Aeneas McDonell Dawson, whose acquaintance I made well-nigh half a century ago, when he was R.C. priest at Dunfermline, and I learned from him of the Quigrich of St. Fillan, then in Canada, which as yet I had no more thought of visiting than of going in search of the North Pole.

With this information in his mind Wilson probably began his search for the Quigrich very soon after he established himself in Toronto, more than twenty years before the final consummation. Another curious form of reticence in his journal is his use of ini-

tials, or an initial followed by a dash, when he has to speak of colleagues and other persons, particularly those with whom he differed in opinion or policy. It is as though he had an instinctive reluctance to pillory an opponent, even for the private reading of his daughters after his death; for there is abundant evidence in the freedom of his references to family troubles that he had no thought of a larger circle of readers.

An illustration of his industry outside his regular University work is supplied by a series of journal entries in the early months of 1872, consisting simply of a date and a title. Reference to the files of the *Globe* shows that most of the titles are those of editorials in that newspaper, on the dates named. The rest may have been similar contributions to other newspapers. The articles in the *Globe* are unsigned, and, except for the subjects treated, which are mainly educational or historical, or in some instances in the nature of book reviews, there is nothing to distinguish them from the other leading articles on the same page of the newspaper. Between February 20th and April 17th there are no fewer than twenty-one of these contributions. Whether he continued to supply leading articles and did not take the trouble to note them in his journal, or whether the arrangement with the newspaper for such contributions



Nipigon River, from the first rapid

*(From a water-colour sketch by Daniel Wilson)*

came to an end after April 18th, cannot be known with certainty.

Wilson's eldest daughter died in 1877, and in the years immediately following he was engaged in minor and more or less ephemeral literary work, which he seems to have welcomed as a solace and escape from his sorrow. He writes articles for the forthcoming ninth edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica; he accepts an offer from the Nelsons to revise proofs of a new series of English readers. He also undertakes to write an introductory chapter on prehistoric Scotland for a history of that country to be published by Messrs. Blackie and Son. These small engagements kept him busy and were almost the last of his purely literary performances, since, though he never gave up writing altogether, these were the latest years in which he had much time to spare for it. For a new phase of his career was opening. On July 7, 1879, he notes in his journal:

> News of more than wonted import. Dr. McCaul retires from the presidency and Prof. Croft from the professorship of Chemistry in University College, leaving Chapman and myself the last survivors of the new batch of 1853, and now the seniors whose turn it will next be to leave the stage. As to age indeed Croft is my junior by four or five years. But he was only 22 when appointed to his Chair in the old King's College days when John Toronto ruled supreme and the University rejoiced in its daily chapel service, Saints' days, Divinity pro-

fessor—old Dr. Beavan—and much else which Trinity College now labours to perpetuate. This will be a memorable year, with a new president and new professors of Classics and Chemistry. We have much need of a little new blood. Things have been drifting of late in a fashion that has made me wonder at times how we escaped the shoals and sunken rocks. Hon. A. Crooks, Minister of Education, starts to-morrow in company with the Vice-Chancellor, Chief Justice Moss,* for England, where it is to be hoped they will find a pair of professors to fill the vacant Chairs and maintain the reputation of our University and College. May they be successful.

There is a detached and indifferent air about this entry, the last few sentences, especially, couched like a newspaper item, that conceals or attempts to conceal what must have been a very real anxiety and ambition in the writer's mind. Wilson had not been the leader of the College Council in opposition to the President for so many years that he was now going to sit down quietly and allow Minister of Education and Vice-Chancellor to secure a new president in England. But he gives no sign, and on October 1st he writes—

College opens with McCaul reinstated as President, Croft resuming the chemical professorship,

* Thomas Moss (1836-1881) had a brilliant career at the University, at the bar, and in political life, and was raised to the bench in 1875. He became Chief Justice of Ontario in 1878. From 1874 to his death in 1881 he was Vice-Chancellor of the University.

and, to complete our incapacity for the real work of the College, Dr. Ellis, the chemical assistant and practical teacher, prostrate under most dangerous hemorrhage of the lungs. Politics I fear engage the attention of our Minister of Education as far more important and pressing than the efficient equipment of our staff for the work of the College. But we shall see. The rumours of what is to be are of the most contradictory and conflicting kind; probably because the Minister does not know his own mind.

The next reference is on November 17, and shows that Wilson was beginning to make stipulations.

An interview with Hon. A. Crooks. His pledge that if the Classical professor is made also President I shall be gazetted at the same time as V.P. with an increase of salary.

Apparently the Minister of Education was in treaty with or angling for some outstanding scholar in England who could not be secured merely for the Chair in Classics, and Wilson is prepared to waive his own claims to the presidency in this event, but requires some recognition at least in the shape of the vice-presidency. He does not conceal however that the position of affairs is disappointing.

January 3, 1880. College matters in a very unsatisfactory state. A retiring allowance, and an escape from its cares would be very welcome. But the fresh claims on me render any thoughts of retirement more unseasonable than ever.

The "fresh claims" are a reference to the adoption of a niece as a permanent addition to his household. The next page of the journal was torn out. It may have contained a record of hopes and fears in connection with the presidency which later he thought it inexpedient to preserve for his family's reading or even for his own. The clue to its contents appears in the first lines of the next page:—

> Who knows if even three years lie at the bottom of the yet undrained cup. What a luxury would an independent competency be now!—on the wrong side of sixty, though with no great consciousness of any failing energy as yet.

For more than four months the subject is not alluded to, although Wilson was doubtless not allowing his claims to slumber. The Minister of Education had gone to England in the search for a suitable successor to McCaul. The journal relates what happened there.

> May 20, 1880. Yesterday a letter from the Hon. Adam Crooks, Minister of Education, London, May 6th. He has got a young Cambridge Honour Classic, E. V. Arnold, of Trinity College, for classical professor, and offers me the presidency of University College. But there is many a slip between the cup and the lip. Here comes another letter. The Cambridge phoenix has on further consideration declined and Mr. Crooks seems to consider that he is at liberty to back out with me in like fashion—a matter on which he will find

there are two to the settlement of the questions to which that must lead.

The ironical tone of this entry suggests that Wilson felt himself on sure ground in his determination either to hold the Minister to his offer or to sell dearly his own acquiescence in its withdrawal. Four days afterwards, on May 24th, he replied to the Minister, and in a later entry, when reviewing the circumstances of his appointment, he implies that he offered the Minister his resignation from his professorship on an adequate retiring allowance.

Jany. 1, 1881. A year eventful to me has run its course. On the 24th of May wrote to Mr. Crooks intimating that I was about to sail for England on June 5th and asking him "to inform me on what terms you will allow me to retire." I left Toronto in the belief that I had delivered my last lecture, and when in Edinburgh revisited my old Elm Cottage with the thought and hope of recovering it and ending my days there. Maggie [Mrs. Wilson] was contented, and I was more than reconciled to the prospect, when on July 29th, came a cable message from the Minister of Education, "Council will advise your appointment as President", and instructing me to proceed at once with efforts to find a fit successor for the classical Chair. So here I am, President of University College, with a new lease of Canadian life, and the dream of ending my days in dear old Edinburgh . . . vanished into air. The first starting in my office was by no

means of ease or peace. But already the troubles are over: unless when Parliament meets I should get once more into the political vortex, along with the Minister of Education. But that I can afford to laugh at, whatever he may think of the prospect.

The foregoing entry undoubtedly does not tell the whole story. His letter to the Minister of May 24th must have contained much more weighty remarks than a request for information as to the amount of a retiring allowance. Wilson, as has already been seen, was on intimate terms with Mr. Mowat, the head of the Ontario Government, and accustomed to bring before the latter his views on University matters. It is not likely that at this crisis, when the Minister of Education was in England, Wilson would have abstained from informing the Premier in Toronto that he was not disposed to relinquish, without at least a strong protest, the offer of the presidency formally made to him by the Minister. An entry made shortly after his return from England in the autumn of 1880 reveals something of the pressure exerted in his favour by friends and former students in Toronto.

Oct. 6, 1880. The Young Canada party took the side against the Minister of Education this summer while I was at home, and the strife raged with an intensity very partially realized by me till now. On the 29th of June [? July] Mr. Crooks telegraphed to me to proceed to Oxford and select a

> Classical professor. At a later date I had a commission also to find a Classical tutor; and now I find myself responsible, with a somewhat awkward conflict of relations. The Young Canada or Native party, which resolutely opposed the going to Oxford for a Classical professor, has been no less zealous against the proposed finding a president at Cambridge. So the champions of my appointment as President have me now thrust in their teeth as the culprit who went to Oxford and did the deed of selecting both Classical professor and tutor there. The Minister of Education looks to me to get him out of a scrape.

Thus Wilson found himself President of University College, partly indeed through the Government's acquiescence in the doubtfully justifiable plea that home-grown was preferable to imported talent, but chiefly in recognition of his real competency for that post and his undisputed eminence in the educational world of Canada.

## CHAPTER IV

## PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

WITH Wilson's appointment to the presidency of University College begins a new stage in his career. Official duties now occupied most of his time and energy, and his relations with political and with other educational notabilities form the chief interest of his journal. The journal is especially copious in comments upon his contact with the Minister of Education. Under the constitution of the University and College at that time the Minister of Education was the supreme head of higher as of school education in the province. All appointments in the University and College were made by the Government on his recommendation. No statute, either of the University Senate or of the College Council, could take effect without his approval. With these very wide powers it was natural that there should be constant friction between the Minister and the President, especially when the former seemed to be more influenced by political considerations and newspaper clamour than by the real welfare of the University. The anomaly lasted for twenty-five years after Wilson's appointment as

President, and caused great embarrassment not only to him but also to his successor, President James Loudon,* in their efforts to secure proper appointments to the Faculty as well as in minor administrative matters. The keynote to the relationship of Minister and President is struck in the very first entry in Wilson's journal after his appointment as President.

> October 1880. The Minister of Education systematically pursues the plan of acting without the advice of anybody; and then when everything is in a muddle he comes when too late to beg his friends to get him out of his difficulties. He has done his best to spoil my holiday by his proceedings, and now I find students, graduates, professors and all in a state of intensest irritation, and, as I long since saw, the *laisser faire* system of Dr. McCaul, protracted till the incapacity of age rendered it scandalous, has accumulated a mountain of toil and trouble for his successor. The politicians are taking advantage of this to assail the Mowat Government in a most sensitive point; and so I shall enter on my duties as President with abundant need for all possible tact, prudence and judgment. I wish I were ten years younger, but there is life in the old dog yet.

* James Loudon (1841-1916) was born and educated in Toronto. Within two years after taking his degree from the University of Toronto he was appointed classical and afterwards mathematical tutor in University College. In 1875 he succeeded Cherriman as Professor of Mathematics and Physics, and in 1887 was made Professor of Physics alone. He succeeded Wilson as President of the University in 1892 and retired in 1906.

During the first year of Wilson's presidency the Vice-Chancellor, Chief Justice Moss, died, and the University Senate had to elect a new Vice-Chancellor, officially their chairman. The death of Chief Justice Moss at this time was a great misfortune for the University. Of his interest in the institution and zeal for its welfare there could be no doubt. As Wilson says of him in the journal, "he was a man of clear intellect, sound judgment, and sterling integrity. He has left behind no one equal to him to fill his place on the Bench, and so far as I can see no one at all fit to succeed him as Vice-Chancellor". The two men could have worked together with harmony and mutual support. The election by the Senate of Mr. (now Sir William) Mulock* as Moss's successor introduced a much younger and more inexperienced man into the administration, and Wilson never entertained the same cordial relations with him that he did with his predecessor. Moreover Wilson was his competitor for the Vice-Chancellorship, and it would

* William Mulock was elected to the University Senate as a representative of the graduates in 1873 and at once began to take a leading part in University business. On the death of Chief Justice Moss in 1881 he became Vice-Chancellor and retained that position until 1900. He was in political life early, being elected a member of the Canadian Parliament in 1882. On the defeat of the Conservative Government in 1896 he became a member of the Cabinet of the Liberal leader, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and held office successively as Postmaster General and Minister of Labour until 1905, when he was raised to the Bench, and in 1923 he succeeded Sir William Meredith as Chief Justice of Ontario. On the death of Sir Edmund Walker in 1924 he was elected by the University Senate to the Chancellorship of the University. He was knighted in 1902.

appear that it was Mr. Mulock's open candidature that induced Wilson to offer himself. Such at least is the inference from the following entry in the journal:

> Jany. 15, 1881. Saturday, in town on business, went into Mr. James Michie['s] to get a pen and ink for the purpose of signing some cheques which the Bursar's clerk had stopped me on the street to sign. By and by in came Judge Morrison; and in the course of conversation learned fully of the zealous canvas Mr. Mulock is making for the Vice-Chancellorship. It was a seeming chance of the most accidental kind, but it leads me to take steps I should not otherwise have thought of, which may lead to important results.

This mysterious reference is the only hint in the journal of the fact that Wilson himself became a candidate in opposition to Mr. Mulock, and that he was defeated in the election by the Senate, receiving four votes to Mulock's eleven, while a third nominee, Mr. (afterwards Chief Justice Sir Thomas) Taylor, received three. But neither his candidature nor the election itself is further alluded to in the journal.

Wilson's new duties as President necessarily entailed constant attendance in his room at the College and he found that the house at the corner of Bloor and Huntley Streets, which he had occupied ever since Mrs. Wilson with her two little daughters had joined him in Canada in 1854, was too far away from his

work. There was a proposal that the University should provide a house for the President, but this was dropped from fear of opposition in the Legislature to a Government grant for the purpose. So Wilson was first accommodated with a house rented for his use by the University, and seven years later bought one for himself at the corner of St. George and Russell Streets, in which he lived to the end. In this year also he paid his first visit to the White Mountains of New Hampshire, to which he returned every summer during the rest of his life, except in those years when he visited his native land. His chief occupation during the summer vacation was sketching. He used to walk and sketch indefatigably, and the result was seen in the hundreds of water-colour sketches which he left behind him, many of which have passed into private hands in Canada. One of these is reproduced opposite to page 112. His facility in sketching, as in writing, was remarkable. As a rule he produced two a day during those holiday excursions, one on his morning walk, the other in the late afternoon. But often, from the testimony of his daughter, his constant companion on these walks and herself an artist, he would have completed his sketch before hers was half done, and then turning to another point of view would dash off a second before she had finished her first.

It soon became apparent that the new President

was making his influence felt in the University. Here is an instance of his activity.

> Nov. 15, 1881. Gave the inaugural lecture last night in the School of Practical Science for a set of courses of evening lectures which it has cost me a good deal of trouble to organize. Subject: the practical uses of science in the daily business of life. A good audience and fair promise of success. All the lecturers have now agreed to take part, which, considering the strong opposition at first and the persistency with which it was upset last winter, is very satisfactory to me. The nuisance is that I cannot stand night work as I once could; it cheats me of sleep the following night.

About this time he received from the Marquis of Lorne, then Governor-General, a gratifying mark of esteem. The Marquis had cabled to Lord Rosebery, the Home Secretary, urging that Wilson be appointed Historiographer Royal of Scotland, vacant by the death of John Hill Burton. He let Wilson know of his action and expressed his hopes that it would be successful. Wilson's comment is as follows:

> He suggests a fear of the not unreasonable objection that the Historiographer of Scotland ought to reside there. It is true that his duties are *nil,* and so may be done as well here as under the shadow of Arthur's Seat. Still appearances must be kept up. I should certainly be greatly gratified by such an appointment. But I shall not hope where I fear hope is vain.

A laconic entry later gives the sequel.

> Nov. 23, 1881. Letter from W. N [elson]. Dr. W. F. Skene has been appointed Historiographer Royal, pay £240 per annum, duties the expenditure of the same.

The first thorny question that Wilson had to grapple with as President was the demand for equal admission of women with men to the University and College. The first overt step was taken on February 3, 1882, when he notes in his journal—

> A deputation of ladies—strong-minded—bent on having the College thrown open to women, Parliament to be appealed to, etc., etc. I have had an inkling of this for some time, and kept it in view in writing certain letters to lady applicants which Parliament is welcome to peep into now if it has a mind.

The next entry is nearly a year later.

> Dec. 19, 1882. The return of correspondence with ladies claiming admission to the College, called for by the Legislature last year, comes out most opportunely to-day, when the papers are full of the troubles resulting at Kingston from the boasted scheme of co-education in which they welcomed a fair candidate refused by us. The main trouble, as might be expected, is in Medicine. But in any department when the numbers increase trouble is sure to arise. And yet the ladies have a just right to complain that young men alone should share the provision of the State for higher education.

The last sentence shows that Wilson was not at all unfavourable to higher education for women, but he saw serious objections to co-education, and was in fact casting about for some other means of satisfying the legitimate demands of the ladies. The College Council now discussed the question.

Sept. 20, 1883. At College Council much needless friction over the troublesome question of admitting lady students. All think "better not", all but one say "certainly not". Yet to get them to say it in any definite form cost an amount of worry worthy of Parliament itself with the Irish brigade in full force.

Sept. 26, 1883. Posted to-day letters to five lady applicants demanding admission to the College. I say very decidedly No. But the Attorney General may be weak enough to say yes; and Parliament is master. But I have great faith in the power of steady passive resistance, notwithstanding a strong-minded madam's declaration to-day that she would force us to submit to woman's demand for her Rights.

Oct. 3, 1883. The question of co-education ripens betimes. Mr. V. C. M[ulock]'s purpose to make political capital out of it became so manifest that I have let the papers have my letter of refusal.

The question had by this time ripened sufficiently to engage the attention of the legislature, and the concluding stages were in the form of conferences with the Government.

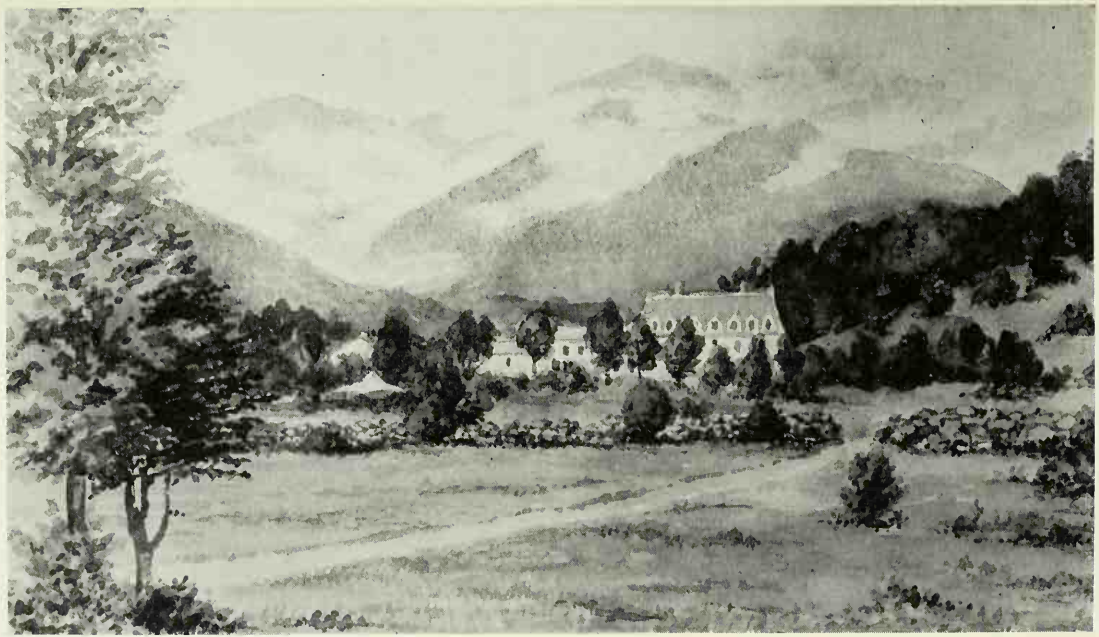
February 11, 1884. Satisfactory interviews with new Minister of Education [Hon. G. W. Ross*] on admission of women to College and other matters.

March 3. At the Legislative Assembly to-day debate on co-education. The assembled wisdom of the province decides in favour of it.

March 9. Devoted my Saturday's leisure to penning a letter addressed to the Minister of Education, but really designed as an answer to the debate in the legislature on this question of co-education. The Attorney General, according to his wonted policy, aims at evading all responsibility, and seeks to throw on me the invidious course of introducing a change which I disapprove of. I have no intention of permitting any such procedure. A hard day's work. Called at the Grange and got Goldwin Smith† to give me the benefit of his advice. He wisely moderated one or two strong expressions, though my aim throughout has been to write not only temperately but courteously.

* George William Ross (1841-1914) was first a school teacher and later an inspector under the Department of Education. In 1872 he entered public life as a member of the Canadian Parliament on the Liberal side. Having been defeated in a subsequent election he turned his attention to provincial politics and became a member of the Ontario legislature. He succeeded the Hon. Adam Crooks as Minister of Education in 1883, and in 1899 on the death of the Hon. A. S. Hardy he succeeded to the premiership. His Government was defeated and resigned in 1905. He was appointed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier in 1907 a member of the Dominion Senate, and was knighted in 1911.

† Goldwin Smith (1823-1910) was born in Reading and educated at Eton and Oxford. He took high honours at the University and was elected a tutor and fellow of University College. He was secretary of the Oxford University Commission of 1854, and Regius Professor of Modern History from 1858 to 1866. He accepted a professorship at Cornell University, Ithaca, in 1868, but resigned two years later and settled in Toronto where he spent the remainder of his life.



Osceola House, Waterville, New Hampshire

*(From a water-colour sketch by Daniel Wilson, dated August 24, 1886)*

March 12. Proofs of letter to Minister of Education. By to-morrow shall have it in the hands of all the members. I think I have shown them pretty conclusively that on the merits of separate ladies' colleges *versus* co-education the weight of opinion on the part of educationists is overwhelmingly against them. If they now choose to force the miserable system on us, merely because it is cheap, I at least have freed myself from the responsibility.

March 18. G. R. R. C[ockburn]* gives me a hint that my acknowledgment in my letter to the Minister of Education that whatever Government or Parliament finally determines I shall be prepared to carry out to the best of my ability has upset the plot of Mr. V. C. and the native party, who counted on my quarrel with the Government.

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* George R. R. Cockburn (1834-1912), a native of Edinburgh, had been recommended by Dr. George Wilson in 1858 for the position of English master in Upper Canada College, a secondary school, at that time and until 1887 under the management of the University Senate. But before the appointment could be confirmed Egerton Ryerson secured him as the head of the new Model Grammar School established under the auspices of the Department of Education. In 1861, however, the principalship of Upper Canada College having become vacant, Cockburn was offered and accepted the position, which he held till 1881. Wilson's journal comment on the circumstances of Cockburn's retirement is as follows:

"September 30, 1881. Went to the distribution of prizes at Upper Canada College to say a friendly word on behalf of the Principal, now forced into retiring after upwards of twenty years service, during which he has restored its finances, more than doubled its pupils, almost rebuilt its college buildings, and left a surplus where he found a large deficit in its funds. Such is gratitude. He had his defects; but he has proved a wise, skilful administrator, and a most faithful head of the College, to the utmost of his ability promoting advancement".

Mr. Cockburn subsequently was elected a member of the Canadian Parliament and sat for Centre Toronto in the Conservative interest from 1887 to 1896.

March 28. Long interviews with Attorney General. Nothing definite as yet about what is to be done in the matter of co-education. It is to him a trifle, of no political moment, and in which the opinion of a girl outweighs the judgment of experience. I have given him distinctly to understand that we shall look for an Order-in-Council before we do anything. A radical change of that sort is beyond the province of the College Council. However I must learn what are the ideas of the Minister of Education when he returns from Ottawa where he now is.

April 2. Very satisfactory interview with Minister of Education. Must not count too much on favourable promises, but as far as I can see the outlook is much more hopeful than I had reason to anticipate, both in reference to the lectureship in French and Italian, and to co-education. The latter matter at least, I have his assurance, is to stand *in statu quo* for the coming year; which is much, as it will compel a reconsideration of the whole question by the legislature. Mr. R[oss] even hints at a distinct ladies' college. We shall see. The financial aspect of the question is the lion in the way. But it is satisfactory to find that my "Letter" has not been wholly in vain.

Wilson was soon to discover the value of Mr. Ross's "assurance".

June 6, 1884. Minister of Education at College: Hints of co-education. Any clap-trap bit of popularity-hunting sure to be in favour; and

no reliance to be placed on present promise as any guarantee for the future.

June 20. Addressed a long letter to the Minister of Education. Throw on him and on the Government the responsibility of all action in reference to co-education; will do nothing without an Order-in-Council.

Sept. 9. Interview with Minister of Education. Have succeeded in shelving co-education I think for another year at least.

Oct. 1. On the ninth of last month the Minister of Education for the third time gave me official, though unfortunately only verbal, assurance, that things were to go on in the College without change for another year. No lady students. But the *World*, the *News*, and also, I learn, certain Hamilton papers have been abusing me with all their virulence, and calling on the Minister to "show some backbone", which he accordingly does by changing his mind once more, and we are to have an Order-in-Council for the admission of women as students. We are to have it—for actually College opens before the Ministry have made up their minds, and so we shall have to admit young women without even the rudest preparation for needful accommodation. Politics have no room for the timely consideration of such trifles as College matters.

March 14, 1885. An interview with the Commissioner of Public Works about provision for lady

students. The Minister of Education is once more reckless of all his promises, as I shall not fail to remind him. Yet would any change be better?

March 27. When the Ontario Legislature resolved in its wisdom that women were to be admitted into University College the Minister of Education was profuse in his promises of liberal expenditure, a thoroughly efficient outfit, timely notice before any change, etc. The last promise was utterly falsified when an Order-in-Council, hastily adopted after College had opened, in October last, forced them in on us without any opportunity for preparation. Then came fresh promises; it was a mere delay, and now Parliament is about to be prorogued, with every promise falsified.

It is apparent from the above extracts that co-education was accepted by the Government, perhaps unwillingly, as an economical way of meeting the demand for higher education of women. If the experiment has not turned out so badly as Wilson seems to have feared, it has not, in the opinion of many good judges, proved the best answer to that demand. Wilson would have welcomed a separate college for women, but the Government was not prepared to meet the expense. What is quite clear from the journal is that the Minister of Education deceived Wilson with promises of delay and of handsome appropriations for additional rooms which he had very little expectation of carrying out. There must have

been much political bargaining behind the scenes of which Wilson was carefully kept uninformed. The same process was visible in other important questions, as will be seen later.

## CHAPTER V

## UNIVERSITY FEDERATION

DURING Wilson's presidency a new era began for the University. His entry upon office almost coincided, as has been already noted, with the beginning of the Vice-Chancellorship of Mr. Mulock, a young and energetic man, always on the watch for opportunities of enlarging the scope of the University's work, and especially skilful in turning to account the many and diverse movements in the country for extended educational facilities. The admission of women to the University was the first new departure, but the most important subject that came up for consideration and settlement in Wilson's time was the federation of the various universities and colleges of the province into a single institution, supported in the main by the State and under more or less of State control, but at the same time including colleges which as units in the general combination retained authority over their own students and Faculty, in independence of State supervision. The first overtures seem to have been made in 1883, according to the *History of Victoria*

*College* by the late Dr. Burwash,* who was in all the counsels of the Victoria College authorities from the first. The initiation of the movement followed upon the virtual abandonment of an attempt to arouse public sentiment in favour of substantial financial aid by the province to the University, which was now finding its original endowment too small to enable it to keep pace with increased educational requirements, especially in the sciences, and with the growing number of students. Wilson's reference to this attempt on the part of the Vice-Chancellor and others is not complimentary, but his sagacity and experience were not at fault.

> Oct. 17, 1883. In this morning's *Mail* and *Globe* the report of Queen's College, Kingston, anniversary proceedings follow [*sic*] close in the wake of our own; and I am not at all surprised to find President Grant sounding the first warning note of uncompromising opposition to our Vice-Chancellor's and graduates' scheme of an application to Parliament for additional endowment. With the representatives of three influential rival institutions, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Methodist, all inevitably marshalled in opposition, it has always seemed to me the most short-sighted folly to dream of a legislative grant; and as to Mr.

* Nathaniel Burwash (1839-1918), a Canadian by birth, was educated at Victoria College, Cobourg. He entered the ministry of the Methodist Church in 1864, and in 1866 joined the staff of Victoria College, and succeeded Nelles as its President in 1887. He retired in 1913.

> Mowat moving in such circumstances they are truly reckoning without their host. His policy has never been to lead, but to find how the current sets and swim with the tide. Dr. Nelles* of Victoria College will in all probability follow suit, and then our young gentlemen will perhaps find out how visionary their scheme is.

The "young gentlemen" were not long in appreciating the visionariness of their scheme; and the Vice-Chancellor was quick to change his tactics and devise a new one, which seems at first to have involved the extinction of University College as a substantive institution. This is perhaps indicated by the following angry note in the journal.

> Jany. 28, 1884. Letter from ——, without exception under all the circumstances the most insolent letter I ever received. . . . The whole tendency, however, in College matters I can see will be to subordinate the College Council to the Senate, and if possible reduce the professors to a mere set of hired lecturers with no interest beyond their individual work and pay. I shall continue to resist the movement, but my time is now very short.

From the foregoing extract (which is not quoted in full) and from many others it may easily be inferred that Wilson was of an irascible disposition. The youngest of his sisters has related that her brother

* Samuel Sobieski Nelles (1823-1887) was born in Canada and educated partly at Victoria College, Cobourg, and partly at colleges in the United States. He entered the ministry of the Methodist Church in Canada in 1847, and in 1850 was appointed President of Victoria College, which position he retained till his death.

in his younger days was given to gusts of temper, and that she remembers him in one of these passionate outbreaks slashing and destroying an engraving plate on which he was at work. But on the first visit he paid to Scotland from Canada, which did not take place until some half-dozen years had passed, the family were struck by the complete self-control to which he had schooled himself. This absolute mastery of his temper henceforward never failed him. When a sentiment or argument offended or displeased him he could manifest a certain lofty and dignified disapproval, but he rarely condescended to angry words. His expression of scorn on these occasions is suggested in the middle head of Sir George Reid's triple portrait of Wilson, a reproduction of which forms the frontispiece to this volume. But although in public and in conversation he restrained his natural irascibility he seems to have indulged himself to some extent in vehement language when writing his journal.

On February 18, 1884, he pastes into his journal an editorial from the *Globe* on the University banquet held two days previously, at which speeches had been made foreshadowing negotiations for a parley between the various educational institutions, and continues:

> So says the *Globe* of to-day, which is so far well and satisfactory, and now Dr. Nelles writes "pri-

vate and confidential" wanting an interview, to see if we can come to some terms of federation with Victoria College.

Feb. 22. A long confidential discussion with Dr. Nelles, Principal of Victoria College. The denominational colleges are willing to enter into a confederation with the provincial university on certain conditions. It is desirable to encourage them if rational terms can be agreed on. But the politicians would sell us to win the Methodist vote, and if we don't take care University College will go to the wall between them. But I think I see my way to confederation on a just and sound basis, if the politicians, including our own Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, don't sell us for their own party purposes. . . . The deadly element is jealousy of University College as the pampered rival. We must have no stronger staff than they, no smaller fees, no greater privileges in any way. It is the old game of the Bulls and the Bears, and the process at present indicated is not levelling up, so as to bring them to our level, but dragging us down to theirs. We should have the worst in such a contest, with the politicians as umpires. As for me I fancy the present state of things will last my time, but I would fain place it on a substantial foundation for the future, and that must be done by the students all ranking as undergraduates of a common university, none of them specially as ours. We must become the University teachers for all that will avail themselves of our instruction; and let Victoria, Queen's, Trinity, St. Michael's, count heads as

they best can. That will give them a common interest to sustain us, instead of being banded together by a common jealousy against a favoured rival. But who knows what plans and plots are on foot. Dropt a note to-day to the V.C. to let him know that I had a good inkling of what he has been about without telling all I knew.

The last sentence of the above extract is enough to show that the Vice-Chancellor was pursuing a course of negotiation and bargaining with the denominational colleges without taking the President of University College at any rate into his confidence. In this connection reference may be made to the curious story of how Dr. Nelles in all innocence revealed to Wilson that the Vice-Chancellor and the Minister of Education had actually promised that Victoria College should occupy the University College building, in order to meet the objection of the Victoria College representatives that the expense of erecting new buildings in Toronto would prevent their acceptance of the plan for federation of the colleges. Wilson forthwith went to the Minister to denounce the scheme, and was met with defiance. He thereupon betook himself to the Prime Minister, told him what he had learned, and threatened to expose the whole affair in the newspapers in a communication over his signature unless he received written assurance from Mr. Mowat himself that the plan was

abandoned; which assurance he received the same day. The story, which was given publicity in the late Professor VanderSmissen's contributions to Volume XVI of the *University Monthly* (pp. 134 and 295), was related to him by Wilson himself, and the present writer independently received the same story from Wilson. In a much later conversation of the writer with the late President Loudon, the latter expressed the opinion that there must have been some such proposal, since the Vice-Chancellor early in the negotiations had suggested to Loudon himself the possibility of the Faculty of University College being provided with other quarters in the event of confederation. Mr. Stewart Wallace, in his valuable *History of the University of Toronto* (p. 127, note) considers that Wilson misunderstood Dr. Nelles' allusion and jumped to an unwarranted conclusion. He rests this opinion upon the late Dr. Burwash's statement that he had never heard of such a proposal. Dr. Burwash's accuracy is of course unimpeachable, but the proposal might nevertheless have been made to Dr. Nelles under strict injunctions not to communicate it to his associates prematurely lest it should come to nothing. He, honest man, never dreamed that a proposal involving the future home of University College was not known to and approved by the President of University College. As Wilson cryp-

tically says in his journal, "Dr. Nelles let the cat out of the bag, and I caught it".

The two facts in Wilson's story which are inexplicable, if there was no foundation in fact for the "plot" which he thought he had discovered, are the defiant attitude of the Minister when Wilson questioned him about the supposed promise, and the readiness with which the Attorney General gave Wilson in writing the required assurance that the transfer of the University College building should not take place. Had there been no such promise the Minister would surely have said so. Wilson might not have believed him, but it is inconceivable that when taxed with what was untrue, and even fantastically untrue, he should have been defiant, behaving in short in such a way as to confirm Wilson's delusion. Nor, when the facts were brought before him, after Wilson's interview, would the Attorney General have failed to point out to the irate President that he was under a misapprehension, and that the Minister's conduct was by no means as underhand as he had supposed. The inference is inevitable that there was some understanding between Vice-Chancellor and Minister on the one side and Dr. Nelles on the other, not perhaps amounting to a promise, but at all events to a suggestion that means would be found to oust the President and Faculty of University College from their own build-

ing, and to convert it to the uses of Victoria College. A sentence in Wilson's journal entry of April 2, 1886, quoted later, shows that, on whatever ground, Wilson's suspicion of an intention to turn University College out of its building remained, and indeed it was obvious, both then and later, that one of the prime objects of Victoria's diplomacy was to weaken University College, and ultimately displace it as an unnecessary element in the system of University and federated colleges.

The private conversations continued, with Wilson still not admitted, and progressed sufficiently to warrant semi-publicity for the efforts.

> July 24, 1884. Conference at Education Office with heads of Colleges on confederation. When all are agreed on what they mean by confederation it will be time enough to say what we think of the plan. Meanwhile much talk and not a little sectarian bigotry.

From this date onwards the references to meetings of representatives and conferences respecting confederation are frequent. It will be well to put them all together here in order of time so that Wilson's attitude may be apparent, and the gradual working out of the scheme reflected in his comments.

> November 22, 1884. Yesterday a *sederunt* from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Education Office with the representatives of all the Colleges, Queen's, Vic-

toria, Trinity, St. Michael's, Knox, Wycliffe, McMaster—all met in conference to consider the possibility of University Confederation.

December 5. An interview on University Federation with Dr. Nelles, Professor Burwash, Principal Caven, Mr. Mulock and Professor Loudon. More and more convinced that the scheme is neither more nor less than a revival of the old attempt of the Methodists to lay their hands on the University endowment.

December 12. Day of weary College affiliation conference. From 2 to 6 p.m. in Senate Chamber with Dr. Nelles and Professor Burwash clipping and paring at poor University College to cut it down to a Victoria measure. Principal Caven and Professor Loudon *contra*. . . . Dined at the Club by invitation of the V.C. with the same gentry, and clipping, shearing, paring once more; got home to bed before 1 a.m.

December 20. On Friday the 19th a conference at 2 p.m. with Dr. Nelles, Provost Body, Professor Burwash, etc., and then a dinner at home at 7 p.m., Mr. E. Blake, Mr. Mulock, Principal Caven, Professor Loudon, and Principal Sheraton, to meet the Minister of Education. Kept it up till 11.45. To-day an interview with the enemy from 10 to 1, and then a conference from 2 to 6 p.m., adjourned till Monday at 10 a.m.; an endless amount of talk and jesuitical trickery.

The final meeting or conference took place on December 22nd—

A weary *sederunt* over the endless question of University confederation. Met in the Speaker's room of the Legislature, Minister of Education presiding. Queen's, Victoria, Trinity, Knox, St. Michael's, Wycliffe, McMaster, and the University and College all represented. Talked from 10 a.m. to near 7 p.m., with a brief luncheon interval. Spurts of fervour, sparklings of fun, douses of prosy verbosity; and in the end a kind of amiable compromise that will please nobody. . . . However it has still to be discussed by College Councils, Presbyterian Synods, Methodist Conference, the public, and the Parliament. Blessings on them! I fancy I may be done with it for good and all before they agree. But compromise is the aim, and little good comes out of that.

January 9, 1885. Grand scheme of confederation of all Ontario universities and colleges submitted to-day to our College Council and to the University Senate, as well as to Victoria, Trinity, etc. What the latter will say to it remains to be seen. But there is little appearance of statesmanship in the patchwork thus far.

March 14. The funeral of poor Colonel Moffat, fine man. . . . Walked with W. H. H[owland]* and learned something of ministerial plans for University Federation. Timid, half-hearted policy

* William Holmes Howland (died 1893) was Mayor of Toronto in 1886-87, but is chiefly remembered for his wide philanthropic interests. He was at this time pressing the Ontario Government to establish an industrial reformatory for boys. This was eventually done, but the Victoria College buildings at Cobourg were not utilized, a new building being erected for the reformatory at Mimico.

as usual. A vote to be taken for founding a reformatory school for boys; Mr. H. to undertake to negotiate with the Methodists; $20,000 to be offered for Cobourg College grounds, the Government thereby evading the giving money to a denominational college; the remainder being made up by a gift of a site in the University grounds, which the Government can only do by deliberate confiscation, and, as I trust, not without a row that will scare them. But even suppose all this done, where is the money for the new Chairs, etc., etc., without which Federation is worse than meaningless? My sincere hope is that they will be foiled in their beggarly trading for Methodists' vote, in which our own V.C. is not less deeply interested, nor less ready to sell his Alma Mater for a mess of political pottage.

April 4. In the morning at the V.C.'s a meeting of Victoria College and other College representatives about confederation. We are being sold. Very contemptible.

April 11. Friendly conference with Drs. Caven, Sheraton, and Professor Loudon on University Confederation. A growing sense of suspicion of Victoria College and some development of much needed backbone.

June 12. To-day, after a long interview with the Minister of Education, have decided to take Maggie [Mrs. Wilson] and Sybil [his daughter] with me to pay one more visit, in all probability the last, to dear old Scotland. . . . But before [sailing on July 11] I must see much business safely

settled in the Senate if I am to leave with an easy mind. As to Confederation, the Minister gives me his word that nothing shall be done till I return. Perhaps in that case the best thing I could do would be never to return.

June 18. The Methodist Conference is in session, the question of University Confederation sure to come up; so addressed a letter to the *Globe*, professedly in reference to one from Principal Nelles, but incidentally taking higher and broader ground. It has proved a most opportune shot. "A lively discussion on University Confederation" was reported in yesterday's paper; and to-day I have the satisfaction of seeing they rejected the scheme by a large majority. My object was to let them know that they were being deceived with false promises of concessions altogether beyond the terms of the scheme of compromise, and to which we would never submit.

July 3. Private letter to-day from Dr. Nelles, very friendly. Evidently finds that his correspondence on confederation set a-going in the papers does not help the Methodist plans for having it all their own way. Replied in friendliest terms, but refusing to recede from the points I have insisted on, that we will tolerate no tying down the Senate to three-fourths vote or the like schemes for giving it up to the rule of a Victoria College minority.

April 2, 1886. Invited to the Education Office to meet the Attorney General and Minister of Education. My concurrence wanted in a proposal to concede everything demanded on behalf of Vic-

toria College, especially to allow of the separation of a dwarfed abortion with a ridiculously small inadequate staff, under the name of University College, from the larger and more important Chairs —the latter to be called the University Professoriate—and to agree that the Government shall have power to appoint a different person as President of the one and Chairman of the other. This is in absolute contravention of the agreement in the terms of confederation as finally adopted by Victoria, Queen's, Trinity, etc. Also they distinctly aim at taking the building from University College. Absolutely refused to concur in any such concessions. Have since written to the Attorney General offering to resign, if provided with a fair retiring allowance, and so clear the way for some better arrangement on the basis of a new President acceptable to the Methodists. If it were God's will I should rather hold on to duties which I like, and remain President of the College till death relieves me from my post. But I dread the chance of dismissal on some paltry allowance, such as, with my life policies, would mean penury the close for us if the evil days are in store for me of protracted old age. But "my times are in Thy hand". I have surely learned the lesson to be careful for nothing, but trust all to Him.

The letters that passed between Wilson and the Attorney General appear in the journal.

My dear Mr. Mowat—

One of the proposed concessions to Victoria College to which you appeared to attach special

importance was the abandonment of the condition that *both the University Professoriate and that of the College shall remain in the present building under one head.** The proposal seems to me to involve a breach of faith. The clause was most carefully considered, and was accepted by the Victoria representatives as the condition essential to our consenting to a division of College and University professors. The thing to be called University College under the proposed scheme, if separated from the University professoriate, would be below the rank of a good High School. The only reason for its maintenance would be to magnify Victoria by the contrast with such a contemptible abortion. In other words, they propose, instead of helping Victoria to rise to our present level, to drag us down below theirs.

This Confederation scheme—now that it has shrunk into the mere proposition of a quasi-union with Victoria College, and paying all her expenses to enable her to escape from Cobourg to Toronto —is one that may be purchased at much too dear a cost. As, however, you are urgent for it, allow me to suggest a different proposition. I have served the College faithfully for thirty-three years. The

* The justification for Wilson's charge of bad faith is found in the printed proposals for Federation as agreed to by the representatives of the universities and colleges in 1884. Two of the sections read as follows:

"Professors in such University Faculty shall be a corporation presided over by a Chairman. The same person shall be President of University College and Chairman of the Faculty of the University Professoriate."

"The University College work shall continue to be carried on as at present, in the College buildings, and the University work shall be carried on in the same buildings, in the School of Practical Science, and in such other buildings as may hereafter be erected on the present University grounds."

death of my dear wife has altered the whole aspect of the future for me. I am now in my seventy-first year and, though still not only as capable as ever of carrying on the duties devolving on me, but finding the work congenial to my tastes, nevertheless, if you are willing to make me a reasonable retiring allowance, I shall place my resignation in your hands. You can then easily make terms with the Methodists that will enable you to obtain their co-operation in preserving the national university, the true interests of which are in imminent danger. Give them to understand that the union of the provincial staff of professors—however you may style them—is a *sine quâ non*. Refuse to listen to any proposition for dividing the presidency, but offer to appoint to that office a good man entirely acceptable to themselves. With their own man as President they may even be induced to reconsider the question of reorganizing the whole on the rational and defensible basis of a university professoriate common to all the colleges, and under the government of a Senate on which all are fairly represented. If you can succeed in organizing a university which, while truly national and unsectarian, shall embrace Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and Roman Catholics, with a common professoriate for all, you will accomplish what will be a lasting credit to you as a statesman. I can see great danger in the present makeshift scheme of alienating the Roman Catholics. With a university so organized, and commanding the united sympathy of the leading denominations,

you could easily bring such dissidents as Trinity College to terms by enacting that only the degrees of the national university should be recognized as legal qualifications for High School teachers, etc.

Yours faithfully,

(sgd.) D. WILSON.

The Attorney General's reply is dated two days later, April 5th, and is marked "private".

My dear Dr. Wilson—

I have your note of the 3rd. The only point in it which I answer just now is what you suggest as to your resignation. Such a step is not to be thought of. Instead of removing difficulties it would intensify them manifold. I know of no available man whose appointment would be proper in other respects and would have any such effect as you mention. I hope that you will be President of University and University College until after I cease to be Premier.

Yours truly,

(sgd.) O. MOWAT.

From these letters it is plain that Wilson had not even now lost hope that the denominational colleges might be induced to give up their Arts Faculties and become merely theological colleges. That can be the only meaning of his advice to the Premier to try to organize the University with a single professoriate "common to all the colleges". The first sentence of his letter, again, emphasizes the fact that there was

still in contemplation the removal of the College Faculty from the building known as University College.

The journal entries on the subject continue at frequent intervals.

April 5, 1886. Learned that the Attorney General and Minister of Education have had separate interviews with Dr. Caven, Dr. Sheraton, and Professor Loudon—probably also with others—feeling their pulse as to the proposed Methodist grab. I doubt if they have gained much by the move, but forewarned is forearmed. I see that I may have to face a repetition of the old battles of 1860. After proving a match for Ryerson, Mr. G. W. R[oss] need not be regarded as a very formidable opponent, though he has proved himself fully as capable of duplicity. I fear, however, there is another year of worry and controversy in store. The whole policy of the Government is one of negation and compromise. The very vote for indispensable heating apparatus in the School of Science has been shirked because of "Methodist" opposition.

September 16. Here is University Confederation adopted, though by a narrow majority, by the Methodist Conference, and involving much anxiety and trouble in the coming winter. The Minister of Education is ready to promise and concede the College lands, the College professoriate, the control of the Senate, the endowments of Upper Canada College—anything and everything, in

fact, except public money; and in that lies our only hope.

October 5. Convocation Day. Rev. Dr. Nelles and Dr. Potts and Dr. Dewart responded graciously to our courteous invitation, and so we started on a friendly footing, with Confederation in prospect. I am not blind to the fact that something very like a conspiracy between Queen's, Trinity and Victoria, for gaining the control of the Senate of our University has been foiled for the present. But we are not in smooth waters yet, with a powerful and arrogant denomination bent on winning in some way the supremacy, and conciliating its own adherents to a reluctant acceptance of this concession to the demands for an unsectarian system of national education in the highest, as well as in all other grades; and on the other hand a timid, time-serving pack of politicians ready to win the favour of the Methodist body at any sacrifice, and a Minister of Education wholly incapable of appreciating the mischief that may result from the sacrifices he is now ready to promise wholesale.

March 16, 1887. Received from the Minister of Education the draft of the new University Bill, a piece of wretched confusion in which University and College functions are jumbled together like the conflicting atoms of primeval chaos. Sat over it till midnight. Have fashioned a University Council out of the proposed new professoriate, the College Council, and the School of Science combined, transferring to it all the old powers of

the College Council. But Victoria has to be consulted, and the more such an improvement promises to benefit the University in its teaching capacity the less they will favour it.

P.M. Have had a long interview with the Minister, who jumps at my proposal as a means of clearing up what he had found to be inextricable confusion. He favours nearly all my suggestions, but insisted on confiscating the scholarships to make up the money—more than $6000—foolishly thrown away in the shape of a bribe to the Methodists, relieving the students from all University fees.

March 18. Yesterday received proofs from the Minister of Education. Has adopted most of my suggestions, and even goes beyond them in the matter of absorbing the College Council into that of the University. I heartily approve of it, were it not that I fear it will awaken the opposition of the Victoria people, and in his desire to conciliate he will give up all. The difficulty is to get him to comprehend the essentially distinct functions of University and College. He had put in a clause giving the students an appeal from the Council to the Senate. After some arguing about it I ended by telling him that if it is retained it will be a question with me whether I shall not immediately send in my resignation. Discipline would, or at least might, be made nearly impossible with such divided authority. This everlasting tinkering at University matters by the legislature is most distracting and mischievous.

March 23. Busy yesterday from noon till far on in the night at a final revision of the new University Bill of which the Minister sent me the proofs marked "confidential". To-day had to leave my class without a lecture, to spend it with the Minister talking him into my views. If I could only hope to have it pass into law as he has now accepted it I should be well content. There are of course concessions to Victoria College—notably that of fees, equal to a loss of fully $7000—a grievous loss for which it remains to be seen what equivalent we are to have. But if my "University Council" escapes unscathed I shall be content. But that all depends on the Victoria men failing to discover my aim. I think I have seen through their schemes all along. They were bent on dwarfing University College. I have lent a helping hand to an extent they little dreamt of. But they are keen, and have their own aims and ends to serve, and the legislature are capable of blundering into any folly. I can but work and hope for the best.

March 26. A visit from the Minister of Education yesterday. The Methodists of Victoria insist on the members of the College Council being excluded from the University Council. I expected this. To yield to it is, as the Minister sees, to destroy the symmetry of his Bill, but I have anticipated this from the first, and consequently so encouraged and abetted their determination to dwarf University College that they will only exclude one professor from the University Council by this move. I doubt if one of them has an inkling of this so far.

My only hope is that they will not find it out till too late.

Have written at length to J. M. Gibson, M.P.P.,* an honour graduate of our own, to secure his maintaining the independence of the University Council and prevent any appeal from it to the Senate. Learned from the Minister of Education that he was disposed to yield the point, but took for granted the contrary, as I don't mean to yield it. It will be a triumph if I can succeed in nominally giving up the powers of the College Council and preserving them amply with a mere change of name.

March 29. With Minister of Education all morning, at Committee of Legislature. Interview with V.C. afterwards. The Methodists have only to ask what they please *in re* University Confederation.

April 5. Home at a late hour last night from an anxious discussion with the Attorney General, the Minister of Education, the Vice-Chancellor, etc., about the new University Bill. The V.C., it seems, undertook to pledge the Senate, in a letter of his own, written to one of the Methodist officials when the question of confederation was up before the Methodist Conference, and now he

* Sir John Morison Gibson (1842-1929), of Hamilton in the province of Ontario, had a brilliant career at the University of Toronto both in the Faculty of Arts and in that of Law. He practised law, and entered the provincial legislature as a Liberal in 1879. He was a minister of the Crown from 1889 to 1908 under the successive administrations of Mowat, Hardy, and Ross. He held the office of Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario from 1908 to 1911 and was knighted in 1912.

claims that we sustain him. As the pledge was to allow the Methodist Board of Victoria College a veto on certain actions of the University Senate I absolutely refused, and declared that if the clause were introduced into the Bill I should immediately attack it in the public press. The Attorney General was taken aback at this, but I think I satisfied him that a vital principle was at stake in reference to national education.

April 6. Learned to my surprise, from the morning papers, that the Bill was read a first time last night. Certainly—unless the Minister purposely deceived me, which I do not at all believe—he had no thought of doing so when we parted on Monday evening. I shall be anxious till I see in what shape it was actually introduced.

April 7. Got hold of the Bill at last. On the whole the various points retained as settled at our last interview.

April 16. Returned last night from the Parliament buildings after seeing the Committee of the whole rise and report the University Confederation Bill, on the whole in as satisfactory and workable a shape as I could well hope for. It is now safe I hope. . . . The Minister of Education drove me home, and I had the pleasure of saying to him in all sincerity that I had appreciated the frank straightforward manner he had dealt with me throughout. He very graciously acknowledged my services in the matter, and we parted on the best of terms.

The history of this whole Confederation movement is curious to look back upon. It was mar-

vellously like a conspiracy in its earlier stages. I was kept entirely in the dark. So late as November 4, 1884, I was shown a printed document of date July 21st under the belief that I must be familiar with it. It was the "Report of the subcommittee appointed to draw up for the benefit of the Conference"—preparatory to a meeting to be held in September following—"a memorandum of what has been generally agreed upon at this meeting". The document was marked "strictly confidential", and was signed by "C. W. Body, Chairman, N. Burwash, Jno. H. Castle", i.e., by the Provost of Trinity College, one of the Faculty of Victoria College, and the Principal of McMaster Hall. All this had been going on with the full cognizance of our Vice-Chancellor, and continued so to be, while I was kept as far as possible in total ignorance of it.* The consequences have been that he got himself entangled in all sorts of promises and pledges, which I have felt myself perfectly free to ignore and resist. I have thus come in at the last unshackled, have manipulated the whole Bill, and I think on the whole—though it is not the scheme I should have planned—it is such as I can work satisfactorily and in all friendly desire for the accomplishment of true federation of the de-

* In writing thus of the early stages of the negotiations for Confederation Wilson has forgotten some of the proceedings. That he was not kept "in total ignorance" is proved by reference to his own journal entries of February 22nd and July 24th, 1884. But it is clear that he was not admitted to all the conferences held. No doubt, as he relates, the memorandum of July 21st was unknown to him until he saw it in Dr. Sheraton's hands. The heads of the other colleges were not likely to confide much of their plans and propositions to one who was obviously indifferent if not hostile to the whole scheme.

nominational colleges with us. I obtained sight of the "strictly confidential" Report from Dr. Sheraton, Principal of Wycliffe College, who had obtained it from Principal Caven of Knox College, and took it for granted that as it was then in print I must be familiar with it. It is dated July 21st, 1884. I saw it for the first time, and was allowed to take a copy of it, on the 4th of November. My first interview with the denominational representatives of Colleges was on December 20th of that year.*

April 23. Returned home last night from the Legislative Assembly after seeing the University Bill safely through its third reading. A clause introduced at the special desire of Hon. Edward Blake, designed to confer on Wycliffe College the power of giving degrees in divinity, was so amended as to defeat his purpose, doubtless to the great sorrow of all friends of Wycliffe, myself included. Since the plan was proposed, success was most desirable, for failure puts us in very hostile relations with the Bishop, and gives to all the opponents of Wycliffe a sense of triumph. I saw the danger from the first, and never thought the object worth the risk run. So far as the actual University measure is concerned this Divinity degrees clause has served, like a red herring drawn across the course, to divert attention from the main issues, and let the Bill pass untouched in all its essential points. The scene in the House was a curious one.

* Obviously a lapse of memory. He records conferences on July 24th, November 22nd, December 5th and 12th.

The Bishops of Toronto, Algoma, Huron and Niagara entered and found seats near the Speaker's Chair, my own being offered to Niagara whom I observed standing. Mr. Meredith, leader of the Opposition, made a telling speech on their behalf, and asked that they be heard at the bar of the House. This the Attorney General declined, adding that he could by no means admit the force or truth of Mr. Meredith's arguments, and altogether speaking in a tone that left no room for doubt that he was prepared to redeem his pledge to Hon. S. Blake, and carry the point as part of a Government measure. But it was six o'clock. The House adjourned. I was there again before 7.30. The members slowly mustered, the Opposition in full force, while the Ministerial benches remained empty. The Speaker appeared, ready to take the Chair, and waited in vain. Hon. Mr. Pardee slipped in and whispered to me that their supporters had been talked over and they doubted if they could carry the point. Another long pause, and the Hon. Mr. Hardy came and asked me to come to the Council Chamber. Here I found the whole Ministry in deliberation. The Attorney General told me that so many of their supporters had told him they could not vote on behalf of the clause that they did not deem it safe to risk a division. Mr. J. K. Kerr, representing the absent Mr. Blake and the cause of Wycliffe College, protested indignantly. I said I was not there as the representative of Wycliffe but as President of University College. Nevertheless I said what I could on its

behalf. But the matter was obviously settled, and I was only sent for *pro formâ*. I returned to the House. Presently the Ministers filed in. The Attorney General spoke, but in a marvellously subdued tone; the Minister of Education moved an amendment which in reality yielded all that the Opposition insisted on, and the Bishops had it all their own way. The Opposition were content. The Minister moved that the Bill as amended be read a third time, and so this anxious process of gestation is over.

From these extracts we may infer that while Wilson was little consulted when the policy of federation was being shaped, he had a great deal to do with the details of the actual plan of federation. In two respects his determined attitude prevented what might have proved serious mistakes, viz., the proposed appeal from Council to Senate by students under disciplinary sentence of the former body, and the restrictions upon action by the Senate in certain contingencies in which the special interests of Victoria College might seem to be involved. The ineptitude of the former proposal is obvious when the heterogeneous character of the Senate is considered. The members who in any way represented the Faculty were few in number and the graduates' elected representatives would have controlled the vote, and might be counted upon to look very leniently at

breaches of discipline or other differences of opinion between students and professors. The references in the extracts to the other proposal are not so definite that we can be certain just what that proposal was. But to make certain decisions of the Senate conditional upon a three-fourths vote, which was one of the clauses to which Wilson refused his consent, is suffcient evidence that the objections to such decisions were not likely to commend themselves to reasonable men.

One of Wilson's strategical triumphs, as he considered it, came to nothing. He repeatedly alludes to his manipulation of the composition of the University Council, and prides himself upon having succeeded in reconstituting the College Council under a new name. His method of operation had been to make sure that each of the existing professors in University College had a chair in the new University professoriate, so that the new University Council, composed only of professors in the University, should be practically identical with the old College Council, which similarly had been composed of professors in the College together with the Dean of Residence. Many of the subjects hitherto taught in University College were by the Act transferred to the new University professoriate, leaving only the languages and moral philosophy as College subjects. At this time

the only language subject represented by a professor was Greek, all the rest, other than English, which combined with History was Wilson's own subject, being taught by lecturers with no seat on the College Council. Wilson himself as Professor of History as well as English Literature became a member of the University professoriate. By inserting in the list of University subjects Comparative Philology and History of Philosophy, and by securing the appointment (without salary) of the professor of Greek in University College to the Chair of Comparative Philology and of the professor of Moral Philosophy in the College to the Chair of History of Philosophy in the University Wilson no doubt succeeded in transferring his entire College Council into the University Council, the Dean of Residence at the time being also Professor of Mathematics, which had become a University subject. But Wilson overlooked two things; one was the probability that the lectureships in Latin, English, French and German would some day become independent professorships, and their occupants would suffer under the disability that in the case of Greek he had so skilfully removed; the other and more serious oversight was that a Faculty of Medicine had been created in the University under the new Act, and every professor in that Faculty became a member of the University Council no less than the

professors in Arts. When the Council was first called together Wilson as President occupied the chair and suggested that the first act of the Council should be to authorize a cleavage of itself into two Faculty Councils, one Arts, the other Medical. This eminently sensible and practical measure he seems to have had in contemplation from the first. But he had not taken into his reckoning the sticklers for the letter of the law. Some of the Medical professors demurred, and appealed to the Act which gave no authority for such a division of responsibility. So the Council remained undivided, and matters peculiar to the Arts Faculty were debated and voted upon by Medical members, sometimes with awkward results. So Wilson's planning and contriving for a University Council which should reproduce the former College Council proved in the end unsuccessful.

Another feature of the Confederation discussions which comes out very clearly from Wilson's journal is the fact that the withdrawal of Queen's College and Trinity College from the scheme was the cause of considerable modifications, all introduced to facilitate acceptance by Victoria College and the Methodist body as a whole. It was at this stage that the Premier intervenes for the first time, to all appearance for the purpose of using his great personal influence with Wilson to induce him to accept changes

which the Victoria College authorities required. We have seen that Wilson protests against these changes as contrary to the agreement come to when Trinity College, and perhaps Queen's as well, were participants. He goes so far as to charge a breach of faith, and undoubtedly he prevented some concessions being made which might have proved very embarrassing. But the measure as passed was far from being the measure he desired.

During all these negotiations it is plain that Wilson was not only out of sympathy with the movement for confederation, but that he never quite grasped the great possibilities of educational expansion that would be opened up by a real union of all the universities of the province. The controversies of 1860 were still to him a living issue, and he could see little in the new proposals except a revival, in a more plausible form, of the demand for partition of the endowment. Probably none of the participants in these conferences could have imagined the development that has since taken place, largely as a consequence of the adhesion of Trinity College and St. Michael's College as well as Victoria to the Confederation scheme, but some of them, and the Vice-Chancellor perhaps more than any, foresaw that the University would count for much more with the public, the legislature, and the Government, if even

one alone of the denominational colleges accepted identification with the State University.

It may be well to summarize here the actual effect of the legislation in which Wilson had so large a share, and to connect it with the consecutive history of the University already brought down to 1864. In that year, under the able leadership of Adam Crooks, the denominational colleges were defeated in their last attempt to secure a partition of the endowment. For the next twenty years no radical change in the constitution of the University and University College was made. They continued to exist side by side in intimate partnership, the University under governance of a Senate conducting examinations and conferring degrees, University College under a Council composed of all the professors, having the responsibility of all teaching and the supervision of the students in residence. Some minor changes were made. The Chancellor became an elected representative of the whole body of graduates. A share also in government by the Senate was given to the graduates, who were empowered to elect a limited number of representatives of the several Faculties of Law, Medicine and Arts.

In 1883 began the negotiations for a union of the universities of the province which in due course led to the Federation Act of 1887. Under this Act Uni-

versity College was continued as a partner of the University, with equal right to maintenance from the endowment, but it was shorn of all responsibility for the teaching in mathematics, the physical and the natural sciences, which subjects were transferred to the University; thus was formed a distinct teaching Faculty. The reason for this severance was to enable the denominational institutions entering into federation with the University of Toronto to drop their more expensive departments and confine their efforts to the departments of languages and literatures, in which teaching is independent of apparatus and laboratory equipment. A few other subjects, History, Philosophy, Political Economy, Italian and Spanish, were similarly transferred to the University Faculty for no very logical reason, chiefly perhaps for the convenience of Victoria University, the first and for some time the only denominational university which accepted the plan of union.

The Federation Act also permitted the establishment of a University medical school, and this was the first step taken in carrying out the provisions of the Act. The Medical Faculty of the University, as the new medical school was called, came into existence immediately after the passing of the Act in 1887. It was not until 1889 that Victoria University finally accepted union, and not until 1892 were

its new buildings opened in Toronto. The lifetime of Wilson carries us no farther, but it may be added here that Trinity College, the former Church of England University, and St. Michael's College, a Roman Catholic foundation, formerly in affiliation as a theological college, have joined the University of Toronto as federating Arts Colleges since Wilson's death, and the plan of union as originally projected has advanced thus much towards complete fulfilment.

## CHAPTER VI

## PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

WILSON'S years and his industrious life were now beginning to tell upon him. He had no longer the intellectual freshness that in earlier days would have welcomed a new departure with such possibilities as Confederation. The note of weariness, of longing for quiet and retirement, runs through his journal in the later years.

> May 6, 1884. Borrowed from the Bursar the lease of President's house "For a term of five years from 1st June 1883". The lease terminates 1st June, 1888. It will more than last my time assuredly as President, if not as present entity in this probation of life.

After the extract quoted above of December 12, 1884, he adds—"I wish it were possible to get a decent retiring allowance and be rid of political and clerical tricksters alike". In this bitter sentence the allusion to political machinations, though primarily in reference to the confederation negotiations, was partly prompted by his experiences in the matter of university appointments. These were always a cause

of friction between the President and the Minister of Education, and the contention continued during the presidency of Loudon, Wilson's successor. Happily the Act of 1906, carrying out the recommendations of the great University Commission of that year, withdrew all university appointments from the sphere of political patronage. The struggles both of Wilson and of Loudon to secure the best candidates for university positions, without regard to the exigencies of party politics, have now only an historical interest.

The first occasion on which Wilson found himself in opposition to party clamour on the question of appointments was when he was directed by the Minister, in that same telegram which conveyed to him the intelligence of his own appointment as President of University College, to proceed to Oxford in order to secure a professor of Classics. Later he was called upon to find a tutor in Classics likewise, that position having become vacant by the resignation of Mr. Pearman. The choice which he made, in obedience to the Minister's instructions, was amply justified by the distinction and subsequent wide popularity of the professor, Maurice Hutton; the early death of Mr. F. A. Vines, the new classical tutor, cut short a career equally promising. But Wilson, on his return to Canada, found himself in the peculiar position of

having as a resident and accepted Canadian enjoyed the support of the so-called "native" party, while he had violated their principles by getting his new professor and tutor from England instead of advancing some home-bred scholars to these positions. His account of the circumstances, written soon afterwards, has been already quoted (see pp. 102, 103 *ante*).

Wilson's subsequent efforts to secure the best men for vacant Chairs, irrespective of nationality, were not so successful, and his journal at these recurring crises is full of indignant reference to the provincial and short-sighted self-interest which would exclude highly trained specialists merely because they were trained elsewhere than in Toronto. In conversation on this vexed question he was accustomed to point to the example of the University of Cambridge, which, great school of mathematics though it was, went outside its own circle and brought Clerk Maxwell from Scotland to fill the Chair of mathematical physics, with the result of making Cambridge the leading university in the British Isles and perhaps in the world for physical research.

The first of these unsuccessful efforts was in relation to his own subject, history. The burden of lecturing and examining in two important subjects, English and history, in addition to his new and exact-

ing duties as President, was obviously more than he could carry. Here is an entry in his journal—

> April 30, 1881. Last day of the month and practically the last of my first Academic year as President. A period of unceasing labour and of much anxiety since September last, but now ended all well, and with, I think, a fair outlook for the future. The College examinations have been unusually heavy—sixteen papers; the reading of the answers a seemingly hopeless task, but I got through them all yesterday afternoon.

Another year of his double, or triple, duties very nearly broke him down.

> April 13, 1882. I seem to have grown old since the last entry [which was on March 20th]. Overwork, overwork, overwork, has been the tale this winter. A succession of anxieties in College matters put me out, and when on Wednesday 22nd [of March] the funeral day of my old friend Dean Grasett came, I rose with a bilious headache, no appetite; went to College, lectured three hours, and then—incapable of lunch—started for the Cathedral to act as one of the pallbearers. Cathedral crowded, draped deeply in black. The old familiar face of my venerated friend still seen in the open coffin covered with flowers. The service began, solemn organ-tones. My head seemed to swim, and then all vanished. I had fainted. When I recovered I was lying on the vestry floor, Dr. Temple kneeling over me. At College next day; but on Friday when I would gladly have gone

home to bed, the Bishop had fixed a meeting with the Cathedral church-wardens and delegates. It seemed an occasion that demanded self-sacrifice, so I went. At night acute pain in side, mustard, doctor sent for. Pleurisy! And so Death as he passed by has given me a warning touch of his bony finger tip. I have felt, however, for some time that no one could hope to stagger along under the burden imposed on me. This illness has given me ground for action.

April 16. Having sat through two hours of the *Antigone* last week I thought I might venture to church to-day; but it was a venture. Before we reached the Litany my head was swimming, the perspiration fell in great drops from my brow, and had I attempted to stand there would have been another fainting in church. I recovered enough to walk out at the last hymn before the sermon; Maggie followed. We caught a stray coupé and got home. But matters are not to be trifled with. I have decided to cross the Atlantic at an early date, and take the only true cure of a good long holiday in my native air.

Now began the task of getting relief from one at least of the subjects of which he was professor.

May 19, 1882. Succeeded yesterday in getting the University Board of Management to report funds—$2000—for a professorship of History, Constitutional Law and Jurisprudence, and to-day, not without difficulty, got the Senate to adopt the needful resolution recommending to the Govern-

ment the relieving me of my duties as Professor of History, and establishing in lieu of it the above chair.

May 20. To-day saw the Chancellor, Hon. E. Blake, the Attorney General and the Minister of Education, in order to expedite matters in reference to the new chair of History. Dr. Schurman, so far as I can judge of him, seems a man we shall be singularly fortunate if we can secure. He is willing to accept on the terms named, and the Minister of Education is favourable. So I hope to have it settled before I leave for England.

May 27. Back from Ottawa and the inaugural meetings of the Canadian Royal Society. The courtesy and affability of the Marquis of Lorne, whose guest I was, made everything agreeable. But I have not returned very sanguine about the success of the Society, especially of the success of the English Literature Section, after my experience as its Chairman, when it shall no longer enjoy the fostering and forcing care of His Excellency. On getting back I find my plans for a separate Chair of History have been undermined in a way that vexes me. . . . At present politics and a contested general election preoccupy the minds of Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Minister of Education, Attorney General, etc. Nothing, I fear, can be done now, and rather than have a temporary appointment at $800, as proposed, with the chances of some incompetent slipping in by this side door, I shall hold on at all risks and do the work myself.

May 30. An endless correspondence about the History Chair. The Attorney General solves the difficulty by authoritatively relieving me from all future responsibility for the teaching of History. This at least puts it in my power to bring a stronger pressure to bear with a view to finding some one else to do the work.

After a refreshing summer in England and Scotland he finds on his return that the whole business is yet to do.

October 28, 1882. I was not a little annoyed on Thursday to find a meeting of the Board of Management called, as was understood, expressly to devise some means for relieving me of the History, and lo! the matter was dropt as a mere trifle of no moment. I have yesterday and to-day written to the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, and my good friend Colonel Gzowski, in terms that will show them the thing has to be attended to. I cannot afford to wait till another break-down. As things go on at present it is a mere alternative of suicide or resignation.

Nov. 1. Letters from Hon. E. Blake, Chancellor, and Mr. Mulock, V.C. Have done their best but in present state of University finances, etc., etc. Recommend an appropriation of $1000 for a lecturer on History or general tutor to me. It remains now to be seen if the right man can be had.

Evidently the right man for History was not to be had, for the next turn of affairs shows that Wilson

is negotiating with Mr. (afterwards Professor) D. R. Keys to take over the subject of English, and soon after the beginning of the new year Mr. Keys arrived in time to relieve Wilson of most of his lectures on English Literature. A solution of the difficulty had been found, and proved acceptable to all. But it was not the solution Wilson desired. The subject of history never meant so much to him as did English literature. His early writings on history had been mere pot-boilers, and his most ambitious books, apart from those on his special subject of prehistoric archaeology, had been *Caliban,* on Shakespeare and his folklore, and *Chatterton,* a biography and critical study of a minor poet of genius. He was always therefore a little sore at having perforce to part with his favourite subject and to keep the one less congenial. It is interesting to conjecture what might have happened if at this period so able and active a man as Dr. Schurman had been added to the staff as Professor of History, Constitutional Law and Jurisprudence. At a much later date Wilson recurs in his diary to this disappointment.

> January 16, 1886. See by papers that Dr. Schurman, whom I did my best in 1882 to secure for University College as Professor of History and Jurisprudence, has been secured for Cornell. We might have had him at a small salary, and he would have been a great acquisition to the College.

May 18, 1892. I see by this morning's papers that Dr. Schurman succeeds President White in Cornell University. Just ten years ago I was full of hope to secure him for the History Chair—I taking the English Literature. But I was thwarted. We lost the chance of an exceptionally able man.

It is hardly necessary to give details of all the other controversies with the politicians over appointments to University Chairs and lectureships. Two instances are sufficient to show what powerful agencies were at work against the President, and how indomitable he was in his determination to secure the best man. The first of these was when an appointment to the lectureship in Oriental Languages had to be made, owing to the proposed retirement of Mr. Hirschfelder. The quality of the teaching was of great importance to the affiliated theological colleges, Knox and Wycliffe, and Wilson found himself strongly supported by them and in the end victorious. But the following extracts will show the difficulties encountered.

November 1, 1885. Wanted a tutor in Oriental languages. A candidate, ———, whose grand claim is that he is one of our own graduates. He has worked since undoubtedly; he has travelled in the East, mastered Arabic colloquially. But for all that he is not fit to hold a candle to Dr. McCurdy, formerly professor at Princeton.

Nevertheless the Lieutenant Governor, J. B. Robinson, urges his eminent claims. A long interview with the Minister to-day. Got his promise to appoint the right man, in spite of graduates, M.P.'s, etc., etc. There will be a grand row I know. But the case is a clear one; and I care not how they storm and rage, if only the Minister be firm.

The Minister however was not firm, and a postponement had to be accepted. But in the spring of 1888 Mr. Hirschfelder's definite retirement took place and the struggle was resumed. Wilson pursued his usual course of appealing over the head of the Minister of Education to the Premier.

April 19, 1888. Long interviews to-day with the Minister of Education. Intimated an intention of making —— lecturer in Orientals, Hirschfelder to retire; and the Deanery to be given to —— as a make-weight, an arrangement not to be thought of. There is trouble brewing, for it is politics, not Oriental Literature, that is at the bottom of all this.

April 21. An interview with the Attorney General, and learned to my surprise that ——'s appointment was actually agreed to at a meeting of Council yesterday. Discovered also the politics. Fraser's [one of the Ministers] constituency is Brockville. Sent the Attorney General a copy of a pretty stiff protest I had written to the Minister, who I now see was playing me false, wanted to be able to say at the Council, if asked,

that he had advised with me. He may find that he has blundered. I gave him credit for acting straightforwardly. I shall know better next time.

April 24. Visit from Professor Young; sent by the Minister to try to get me to approve of —— as Dean. A most unsuitable man, I feel assured. If he reports fairly the result of the interview it will be cold comfort to the Minister.

April 26. A satisfactory interview with the Attorney General. Nothing will be done at present.

May 17. Interview with Attorney General. —— pressed on us after all. Told him it was making the University a refuge for the destitute. I think he feels ashamed of the procedure. But I fear politics is at the back of it.

References to the subject come to an end, and we know that Mr. (afterwards Professor) J. F. McCurdy received the appointment, and scholarship was triumphant over politics.

The foregoing entries are an illustration of Wilson's habit of appealing over the head of the Minister of Education to the Prime Minister, Mr. Mowat. Wilson, in truth, had a very poor opinion of Mr. G. W. Ross, the Minister of Education during almost the whole of his presidency. Not only was he, in Wilson's phrase, a "politician", but he had never had any experience of university education; in his conception a university was distressingly like an over-

grown High School, and he considered that its functions must be similarly regulated by the Education Department. One attempt at such regulation was made by Mr. Ross about this time and can best be described in the terms of Wilson's journal entry on the subject.

> Jany. 22, 1889. Received from the Minister the draft of a proposed Order-in-Council imposing all sorts of absurd restrictions on the professors, and requiring each to report on his department direct to the Education Office. Wrote to the Minister telling him I recognized the prompter of this precious document, it being none other than an attempt to make a tool of the Minister in order to gratify the grudge of —— against Professor Pike, certainly a troublesome gentleman enough. But if the Minister had known his true place and been guided by proper feeling he would have referred —— to me. The Council however will pass no such order. Told the Minister that professors could only report through the President or the [College] Council. If they were required to report direct to the Education Office I should forthwith send in my resignation. The scheme also proposed to put the College Council under the authority of the Senate in certain matters.

The second instance to be given in which political and educational motives were in conflict was when Professor George Paxton Young, the much loved and

revered professor of Philosophy, died in the spring of the year 1889. Young, as already mentioned, had been at school with Wilson at Edinburgh High School, but they were not of the same age and therefore their friendship can hardly be said to have begun in those early days. Wilson's journal comments on Young's illness and death are as follows—

> February 22, 1889. Received to-day the sorrowful tidings that my old friend and colleague, Professor Young, has had a stroke of paralysis . . . His loss to the College and myself will be very great.
>
> February 26. This morning about 9 a.m. my old friend and colleague entered into his rest. A fine simple-minded genuine man, of acute critical powers in his own hazy region of metaphysics, and a man of sterling uprightness and worth. He was a born teacher, possessed of that capacity for communicating knowledge and the accompanying pleasure in his work which no pedagogic or university training can bestow where it is wanting. We shall be fortunate indeed if we can find a worthy successor to fill the vacant chair.
>
> March 1. The funeral day of my old friend, a public funeral, and very solemn and appropriate service in the Convocation Hall. A public funeral I greatly dislike; but if such a mark of respect is to be made it could not have been more reverently and heartily carried out by his colleagues, his students, and all concerned. Once

more that feeling comes over the mind: only now when he is gone, do we realize his real worth.

During the remainder of the Academic year the work of the department of Philosophy was carried on by the Fellow, and the appointment of a new professor was delayed. Wilson's journal tells the story.

> September 26, 1889. . . . Professor Grant of Queen's sees the advantage of the situation consequent upon our loss of Professor Young, and has strengthened the Department of Metaphysics and Ethics by dividing it, and appointing an additional professor to the good one they already have. Here meanwhile the "native party" have taken up the cause of J. G. H[ume], a young graduate of undoubted ability. But the idea, at such a crisis, of putting a raw inexperienced youth into the Chair of Mental and Moral Philosophy shows to what lengths such folly can go. Have had repeated interviews with the Attorney General. Drs. Caven and Sheraton urge the appointment of Professor Baldwin, a Princeton man, and one also who would, I believe, prove a good successor to Young. But the Government are timid, temporize, propose compromises, though the Attorney General would do the right thing if his colleagues would yield. He urged a compromise to-day, and assured me that his experience taught him that compromises were often the wisest course. In politics they may be, but in University patronage they mean MEDIOCRITY.

September 27. Received late last evening a confidential note from the Attorney General: "Only four of us were in Council to-day, and I failed to convince them. There was no choice but to let the matter stand over". Tried this morning to obtain an interview with Colonel Gibson, who may be said to represent the native party on the Council, but he is off to Hamilton, purposely, as I suspect, to secure delay, as the Minister of Education will be out of town next week. So we shall certainly open on October 1st with the Chair unfilled, though the death of Professor Young took place as far back as February last. Have written a long letter of appeal to Colonel Gibson, with Mr. Mowat's approval, and do not despair. But the evil of being in the hands of politicians is more and more apparent.

October 2. Yesterday Convocation went off very successfully. . . . Our old colleague Professor Young was missed, and it is a weakness and trouble to us that his Chair remains vacant. Trouble I shall have I doubt not, and possibly the mortification of some undesirable appointment. But meanwhile we start hopefully with the new Professor of English Literature.*

October 4. Just home from a long interview with our University Chancellor. Truly I may well wish we had reached the last vacant Chair under my régime as President. A successor has to be found for Professor Young in the Chair of Metaphysics and Ethics. The heads of Knox and Wy-

* Professor W. J. Alexander.

cliffe Colleges are naturally keenly interested, and after being perhaps unduly consulted at an early stage are now unwisely slighted. So here I have to coax and cajole, reason, persuade and threaten by turns all round. First I have had to try and talk over the Minister, who set out with the desire to please everybody, and now goes in for a cheap makeshift; appoint a lecturer at a low salary and leave the Chair vacant;—which means: get a cheap bit of mediocrity, and saddle us with him for his life. Next there is the Hon. Colonel Gibson, a graduate, and worthy fellow in the main, but bitten with "nativism", and the mere echo of "the Mole". So there is nothing to be thought of but one of our own native grads. Then comes the Attorney General, most honest and well-meaning, anxious to do his best, but a great believer in compromises. Evade the main issue if possible. I tell him that means mediocrity, which in university matters is disastrous. But no, can I not suggest some third man, anybody rather than Professor B. Say S—— of Cornell? I went at his request to Colonel Gibson, talked him over to the appointing of B[aldwin], and making prospective provision for our graduate H[ume]. There seemed a ray of hope. But now comes the Attorney General: Somebody must stand between the Government and public opinion. So the proposition is to refer it to the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and myself. The V.C. goes "native" of course; the Chancellor won't go at all; declines responsi-

bility, will see Mr. Mowat, and so matters once more hang fire.

October 19. The agony is over, and Professor Baldwin of Princeton takes the vacant metaphysical Chair. It has been a prolonged struggle of two months, since my return from the White Mountains. Two years hence Hume will return, from Germany it is presumed, to divide the work with him. The comical feature is that I have had to undertake, at the special request of the Attorney General, to write articles for the *Globe* and *Mail*, putting in the most popular and praiseworthy aspect, with amplest credit to Minister and colleagues, the result won from them in spite of endless intrigue and chicanery. In the whole matter, however, the Attorney General has honestly striven to do his best.

October 24. Surprised by a telephone from the Minister of Education. Have I written to Professor Baldwin announcing his appointment? Certainly not, never dreamt of doing so. Thought it over, however, and did write, taking care to show the letter both to the Attorney General and the Minister before dispatching it. Mr. Ross, it seems, is sore at having one of the highest prerogatives of his office practically taken out of his hands; which one cannot wonder at, though who but himself is to blame? If he would not act, somebody else had to do so. It looks like a little bit of pet, this leaving me to announce the unpalatable appointment. But he will soon get over that.

The gravest problems presented for solution to Wilson as President have been dealt with. But there were minor troubles which gave him considerable difficulty on various occasions. His relations with the students were uniformly good; they liked his friendly and jocular behaviour when he met them informally, and they were proud of him. But they had their outbreaks, and had to be managed with great tact to be managed at all. Wilson, fortunately, had a certain sympathy with their unruliness, which counted for much in his appeals to them. The following extracts will show the difficulties he had to encounter and also his method of dealing with them.

> November 28, 1881. A week of inconceivable worry. On Friday the 11th at a public meeting of the Literary Society in the Convocation Hall the Glee Club sang "Litoria", a student song chaffing the Freshmen. The latter took offence at the liberty and proposed to stop it by singing "Old Grimes". But the Seniors took time by the forelock and arrested the ring-leaders. The *Globe* lent itself next day to the grossest *ex parte* exaggerations, and I have had an endless correspondence and bother ever since, though I trust it is now about done. But what would they say at home to a correspondence with the Attorney General about a students' fracas over a song, in itself sufficiently innocent, and proceedings at worst amounting to no more than some rough pranks such as no Eng-

lish schoolboy would ever dream of complaining of outside the circle of his schoolmates?

November 2, 1884. Hallowe'en, 31st October, as usual a time of trouble with the students. After an attempt to get into the College, in which they were happily foiled through the vigilance of McKim, they carried out a grand project by firing off the two Sebastopol guns in the park, marched into town, and ended in collision with the police, in which one of them got his head broken by a policeman's baton, and another was arrested and subsequently fined by the Police Magistrate. So to-day a notice was stuck up on the College board inviting all to muster at the corner of Jarvis Street and Wilton Avenue, where the students of the two Medical Schools would join them; and "then to proceed to the Adelaide Street rink where a demonstration will be held. This is a matter in which you are all personally interested. *Bring your heaviest sticks with you.* College boys will meet at the gymnasium at 7 o'clock and then join the Medicals". When they reached the gymnasium they could not get in, the President being there before them, who gave them a word or two of commonsense, on the great wisdom of fighting the police whom everybody but thieves and housebreakers thought their friends, and then coming home with a broken head or getting a shake-down in a police-cell. They gave him three cheers and marched off to join the Meds.

November 3. The police it seems were on the look-out for the young gentlemen, who did not

succeed in having their demonstration and sneaked home ignominiously, cured of such folly, let us hope, for a time.

October 20, 1888. Yesterday was our Convocation Day. Tried a new plan with the students, who have shown a growing tendency to disorder on such occasions, and among other features were disposed to intrude College songs at inopportune times. So I made music part of the programme, handed over the gallery to the Glee Club, holding them responsible for any disorder there. The result proved in all ways satisfactory. The songs were a relief to our somewhat formal routine, and the legitimatizing of the singing enlisted the best men on the side of order.

A later outbreak of the students he describes almost with malicious glee.

November 2, 1891. The students it seems devoted Saturday night to a Hallowe'en riot . . . and demolished the fence round the Normal School. . . . The Minister of Education revered the old fence, he had other and better uses for his money, and here the disorderly rioters have opened a leak that will drain the educational purse cruelly. No wonder he is angry, and, looking about for some one on whom to wreak his ire, nobody seemed so fitting as myself. His letter is an amazing outburst. He ascribes the entire work to our University students [the *Globe's* report states that the students concerned were from Toronto, Trinity, the Veterinary College, the College of Pharma-

cy, and both Medical Schools]. "The matter," he says, "is so serious, as, in my opinion, to demand your attention as President of the University. The country will not long tolerate the expenditure of public funds for higher education if it is to be associated with the destruction of public property and general lawlessness". I fear my answer will scarcely satisfy the wrathful Minister. But as the proceedings took place about midnight, and the charge—if made against the students of the University—include between 800 and 900 in the vague indictment, I contented myself with ascertaining if any of the students in residence were involved in the wild proceedings. To my great satisfaction I was able to certify that they had no hand in it. I felt I was justified in adding, "It cannot be supposed that I am to patrol the streets till midnight looking after our non-resident students". I added an expression of regret at his persistent opposition to the extension of the College Residence.

The reason for Wilson's satisfaction at the wanton destruction of the Normal School fence is given in the last sentence of the extract. The Minister was no friend to the Residence and Wilson had had more than one battle to fight on its behalf. The most determined attack was in 1887, when Mr. Ross made up his mind that the most economical way of providing the additional accommodation for scientific laboratories contemplated in the federation plan was to utilize the residence wing of the University College

building for that purpose. The journal extracts tell the story.

June 14, 1887. Had a long interview, first with the Attorney General and then with the Minister of Education yesterday afternoon, relative to a proposal to abolish the College Residence. The motives are merely to make another cheap move by appropriating the Residence building for the science lecture rooms. It is utterly unsuited for any such purpose. I have given in writing my strong protest against the abolition of the Residence as a "serious injury to the College. The influence of the resident students on the *esprit de corps* and the general conduct and feeling in relation to College questions"—as I have written to the Minister—"very far exceeds that of all the other students combined. Through their means the whole body of the students is influenced. In the College societies, the gymnasium, the games, in Convocation, and in all general action of the graduates in the interest of the University the influence of the resident students is great. Their importance is greatly increased by the peculiar constitution of the University with its affiliated Colleges, and this therefore would be a peculiarly unfortunate time to make such a change, at the very period when affiliation is being largely extended and efficiently organized", etc., etc. So I wrote to the Minister. But I find that the vulgar prejudice against anything approaching to caste or class renders my arguments in favour of a select class of more refined

students, under strict College discipline, an offence instead of any reason for maintaining the system. "I have no hesitation in saying that you will lower the tone". So I wrote to the Minister; but—"lower the tone", why, who wants tone? Everybody is as good as his neighbour. We shall see; but I fear it is a losing fight. I have resignation always as my *dernier ressort*. But there are things he hints at which I must sift to the bottom.

June 20. Addressed a long letter to the Minister of Education to-day repelling charges of lax discipline and misconduct in the Residence. Unfortunately Mr. Baker, the Dean, is absent; but I have written to sundry parents and old students, and meanwhile I indignantly protest against the slanders. But it is the old trick. It suits the cheap scheme of University reform to confiscate the Residence for needed lecture-room accommodation, so the game now is: "Give the dog an ill name and hang him". I fear it is doomed. My feeling is one of indignation, with a disposition to resist. But I get such poor backing that I question how far it is worth while spending my strength for naught.

June 22. An interview with Mr. W. B. Nesbitt, the "Grand Mufti" in Residence, and learned from him confidentially all that can possibly be charged against the students in Residence. According to the ideas of my own younger days, they lead a wonderfully orderly life. A glass of ale seems to be their strongest potation, and that in their own rooms when they have a friend to dinner. But according to the latest stand of teetotal-

ism no distinction is made between beer and whiskey. No doubt they are better without both; but if—as I believe—the truth has been told to me, there has been no intemperance in any true sense of the term.

Without accepting the "Grand Mufti's" easy assurances as fully as did Wilson we may still agree with the general endorsation of Residence, and Wilson soon received more powerful support.

June 29. The Chancellor has written a spirited letter to the Minister, most unexpectedly, but to my great satisfaction. Also the graduates and the Senate have both taken the Residence question in hand, and whatever comes of it the Minister will not be allowed to do all this mischief without some hint of his evil courses. But unfortunately it is not that he means evil, but that he is hopelessly blind to the mischievous effect of his revolutionary scheme.

July 12. Wrote to-day directly to the Attorney General on the subject of the threatened abolition of the College Residence, calling his attention to a letter addressed to the Minister of Education on the 20th ult. to which I have received no answer.

July 13. Thermometer 93 in the shade, and worried with conflicting schemes. Minister seemingly persistently perverse; and graduates in their friendly zeal difficult to restrain within reasonable bounds. But from the attitude which the Attorney General now assumes I hope to escape next

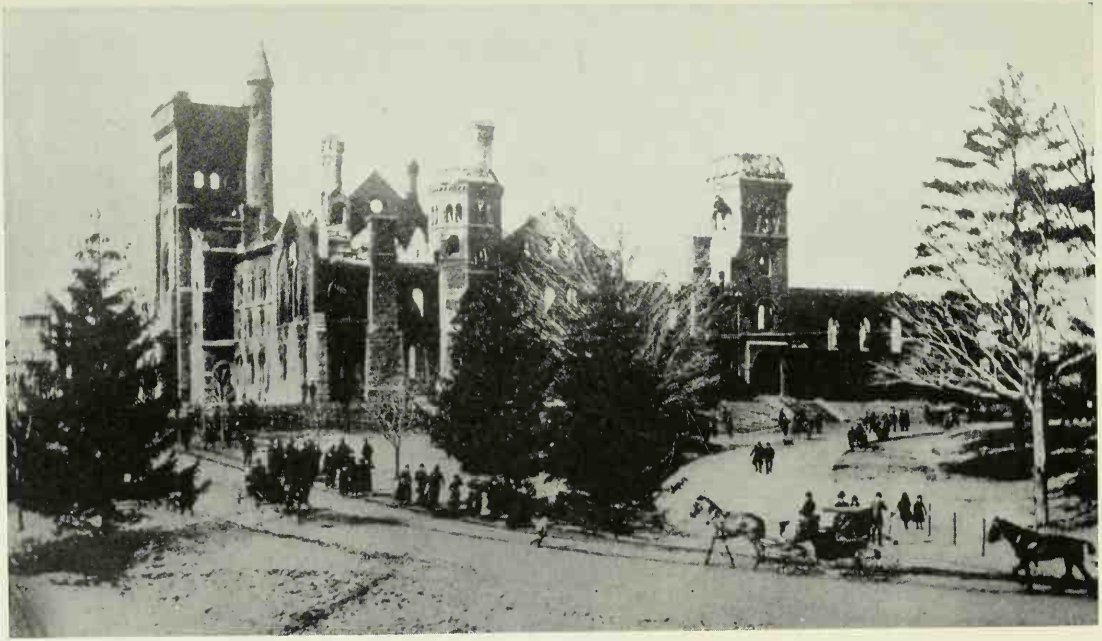
week to the mountains with matters in such a shape that I can leave cares and thermometer both behind me.

July 16. Posted letters to twenty-three old graduates about threatened abolition of Residence.

Nov. 4. An interview with the Attorney General on the Minister's proposal to abolish the College Residence. Read to him letters from parents, graduates, from Sir W. Dawson, Sir William Muir, Principal of Edinburgh University, etc., etc. Left the whole correspondence for his perusal.

The battle was won. But the question recurred at intervals, and, as Wilson foresaw, abolition was carried out, but after his own departure from the scene. The old Residence had fulfilled its function in earlier years but was too small to be much of a factor in College life when the number of students increased largely, as it did in the last decade of the century. So the conversion of the Residence wing of the College to the purposes of teaching was not really a loss, and paved the way for other residences, on a larger scale and more suitable to modern conditions of living.

The last emergency in the career of Wilson as President was supplied by the fire which broke out on the evening of February 14, 1890, and completely gutted the eastern half of the University College building, together with the great central tower. The western portion, which was saved, contained the nat-



University College, Toronto, after the fire of February 14, 1890

*(From a photograph)*

ural history museum, and three lecture-rooms, or rooms capable of being so used, on the ground floor, but the wing running north from the western end of the front was at that time the College Residence, and, except for the great dining-hall, was broken up into small bedrooms and sitting-rooms. So the major part of the building available for lecturing and administration was destroyed.

The first problem that confronted the President was to find accommodation for classes, in order that lectures might be continued with the smallest possible loss of time. Fortunately the first section of the new Biological building, begun a couple of years before, had recently been completed, and the School of Practical Science greatly enlarged. Offers of accommodation were promptly made by the affiliated theological colleges, Knox College and Wycliffe College. The fire took place on Friday night. Saturday was a holiday and was spent in making arrangements for lectures in the available rooms, and the President was able later to announce with pardonable pride that not one lecture had to be cancelled as a result of the fire. The Library had been destroyed, but a hasty purchase was made of dictionaries and other indispensable tools, and a reading-room for students opened in the Biological building. The President's and Registrar's offices were transferred to the Dean's House of the

College Residence. The Bursar's office had happily not yet been moved from its old quarters on the corner of Adelaide and Simcoe Streets, which it had occupied as an integral part of Upper Canada College. Meetings of the Senate took place in the Biological Building. The examinations in May were distributed over many buildings including the School of Practical Science, and the Annual Commencement in June was held in a large tent erected on the campus in front of the ruins of University College. But by that time great progress had been made with the restoration and with other matters no less vital.

The President's immediate responsibility for carrying on the work of the College had been successfully discharged, but there was still much thought and work before him as a member of the governing bodies. Extracts from his journal during these months will show the extent and character of his labours.

> February 15, 1890. A frightful calamity. Last evening I looked on while our beautiful University building was helplessly devoured by the flames. . . . I am resolved to face it bravely. The Legislature must come to our aid. I cannot doubt that popular opinion will sustain our appeal, and meanwhile I must reorganize at once, and prove that we are deserving of being sustained. It is no trifling loss to myself, amid all the work that will devolve on me, that all my lecture notes have perished.

February 21. A week has passed since the awful night. It seems an age since then. . . . It is something now to reflect on with satisfaction. The building perished in the fire of Friday night. When the Board of Trustees met on Saturday at 2 o'clock the architect, in conjunction with Colonel Gzowski, had surveyed the ruins and was able to present an approximate report. The walls are sound, and admit of roofing in and restoring. Probable cost say $210,000, since revised and set at $260,000. The Executive Council, as we learned, were holding a meeting. We sent to ask for an interview, put our case before them, appealed for aid from the Legislature, and found both the Attorney General and the Provincial Treasurer favourable. At 4.45 I was able to meet the Faculty whom I had summoned at 4.30; Knox and Wycliffe College authorities kindly placed their lecture-rooms at our disposal, and with our own Biological Department happily just completed, the rooms that had escaped the conflagration, the Residence rooms—freely placed at my disposal by Professor Baker—and the School of Science, we were able to apportion a room to every professor and lecturer, and to proceed on Monday without the interruption of a single lecture. But there is a silver lining to the cloud. To-day's papers report the first reading of the Bill to vote $160,000, plus our insurance. Liberal subscriptions are coming to our aid, and the sympathy is widespread and seemingly genuine, though the endless letters of sympathy—mere

sympathy, words, words!—is trying, especially with the need of replying to the larger number of them.

February 26. Wearied beyond measure with the endless correspondence arising from the fire. But all goes well. . . . Took a bit of relaxation to-day by snatching time to pen one of my "Old Edinburgh Ballads", *Mary Stuart,* which has been simmering in my brain and has escaped the fire, which is a marvel.

February 28. Wrote to-day to the Vice-Chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge, the Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, Sir John A. Macdonald, Mrs. Cameron—at present in Paris—Andrew Carnegie, the wealthy ironmaster of Pittsburg and a good Scotsman still. Hope that all this epistolizing will not prove a sowing of seed in arid sands. I can beg best in this form. I do hate personal solicitation, and the reception the Vice-Chancellor and I got at the Grange from Goldwin Smith was enough to freeze us into icicles. We were literally shown the door as if we had been a pair of tramps.

March 11. Finished "The Old West Bow", last of the proposed series for my *Memorials* new edition. The writing of them has been a relief to me amid the strain of work and worry which this dire conflagration has involved. I still look with confidence to the attainment of good out of the evil. Improvements in the building that I had despaired of will now be secured. But there is to be much friction from rival committees and wise

advisers who could have made the old building so very much better had they only been consulted in time. Only unfortunately they were not out of their cradles then.

March 28. Here am I negotiating with a Committee of a dozen, and behind them professors, lecturers, tutors, and members of Senate, fully persuaded that they live, not in Canada, but in Utopia; that they hold the strings of Fortunatus' purse; and [that] they are ordained by a wise Providence to anticipate and provide for the wants of young Canada in the year of grace 2999!

April 25. Yesterday submitted the architect's plans for restoration of University buildings to the Board of Trustees and got their approval; Friday at 4 p.m. to the whole Faculty. Dr. —— very pertinacious,, Dr. —— bent on changes that might suit medical examinations, wholly indifferent to the actual wants of Arts students or lecturers, everybody wanting something. A motion to approve of the plans, followed by a counter-motion to have them lithographed and adjourn till everybody could study them and indicate his wishes. Mr. Justice Proudfoot, our new professor of Law, sat next to me, just back from a winter in Italy; so deaf that he hears nothing except what is directly addressed to himself. I passed to him the motion and amendment, and he at once indicated that he would vote for the latter. So I wrote a mem.: "Plans have been carefully studied at repeated meetings of the Building Committee which

consists of representatives named by the Senate, Board of Trustees, University and College Councils, and includes Chancellor Boyd, Mr. Justice Falconbridge, Colonel Gzowski," etc., etc. The old gentleman read, quietly said, "I shall vote for the motion", and the approval of the plans was carried by *one vote*. Mr. Dick, the architect, sat in amazement at my elbow; never ran such a gauntlet before.

At 8 p.m. the Senate met to deliberate on the same question: Approve, or print lithographed copies of plans and adjourn till next month, while this heterogeneous body of upwards of forty members wasted precious time cutting and carving and getting into loggerheads over endless conflicting schemes. The architect volunteered explanations, and in nervous trepidation was eager to disabuse them of misapprehensions. But I whispered to him, "Let them talk." And talk and wrangle and contradict one another they did for upwards of two hours. Then some of the quiet men began to leave, and I got apprehensive that the malcontents might sit it out and have their own way. . . . I got them to vote at last, and retired to rest with a mind at ease. We had safely run the last rapid and were in smooth water; the vote was "Approve".

Thus the last anxiety in the matter of the reconstruction was surmounted. The interior plan of the restored building was modified to secure an increased number of lecture rooms, but the exterior

was to be replaced without alteration, other than the substitution of two floors of lecture and private rooms for the single large hall known to former generations of graduates as Convocation Hall. The Library was provided with a separate building, and another was projected for Convocation and examination purposes. The logical conclusion to this programme has at length been finally accomplished in recent years in the removal of all University administration offices to a house of their own and in the sole occupation of the University College building by the College Faculty and administration.

## CHAPTER VII

## MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

SO far this narrative has followed Wilson's activities in relation mainly to the University and University College. But his interests were far wider and more various than could be satisfied merely by the claims of his Chair and the presidency, or even by writing books and papers on archaeology and literary history. It would give a one-sided idea of the man if his professional and public appearances alone were dealt with in this account of him. One of the strongest ingredients in his character was his religious sentiment. He was brought up as a member of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, and both he and his brother George were zealous adherents to the Evangelical school of Anglicanism. Within a few months of his arrival in Toronto he came to be on terms of intimacy with the leading exponents and supporters of that school in Canada, such as Dean Grasett, Chief Justice Draper, Colonel (afterwards Sir Casimir) Gzowski, and, at a somewhat later date, the Blake family and Mr. A. H. Campbell. Of the Church Association, which was formed to combat the High Church views dominant in Trinity College, Toronto,

he was an original member, as the following extract from his journal shows:

> August 15, 1873. Mr. Campbell, of Peterborough, has been with me yesterday and to-day. We have completed the organization of our Church Association. The Chief Justice [Draper] is our president, and the Dean, V. C. Blake, and myself vice-presidents. We completed matters, after a late *sederunt* last night, by the above four waiting on the Bishop this morning as a deputation to ask him to become patron of the Association! Poor old gentleman, he was in a terrible fix. He did not wish to say yes, he did not dare to say no; so it gave me the opportunity to tell him in very respectful form some very wholesome truths about Church matters. We left our constitution in his hands, and he will have to write us his reasons if he declines, as I presume he will.

When Wycliffe College, originally styled the Protestant Episcopal Divinity School, was founded in 1876, Wilson was among the sponsors and a member of its governing council. For many years he was a delegate to the diocesan Synod from the Cathedral of St. James, in Toronto, and annually his diary records his attendance at the meetings. The following extract refers to a meeting of the Provincial Synod at Montreal.

> September 17, 1872. Here am I spending my strength for naught and my labour for that which

satisfieth not, at this meeting of the Provincial Synod where the clergy seem beset by a judicial blindness, and the last thing a stranger who came suddenly into our assembly would dream of is that it is a gathering of the selected clergy and laity of the Church deliberating on its most sacred interests and really aiming at its welfare. Would that the spirit of our old reforming fathers would revive and breathe life into these dead bones. As for the clergy they are the most unpractical and impracticable beings that ever mortal layman strove to work with in a common cause, though not without some admirable exceptions. Meanwhile I can only wish it were over, and myself home to some more congenial and profitable work. But I must not fail to note that my kind host and hostess, the Venerable Archdeacon and Mrs. Bond, are a most admirable pair; a most earnest faithful minister of Christ, calm, wise, prudent, and unyielding where firmness is needed—a man most pleasant to work with, of few words, but reliable and prompt in action; and with a wife a most worthy helpmate.

In other and less controversial ways he was always ready to give his time and talents to the cause of religious training.

December 27, 1877. The Sunday School festival of St. James's, where I am assumed to be a standing dish. Last year I got hold of a famous Santa Klaus children's story in rhyme which was read with great *éclat;* but now comes the penalty.

I am expected to equal it this year. After hunting in vain for anything suitable I have at length in despair taken pen in hand, and here is the result of the attempt at a Sunday School Christmas fête fairy-tale: Good Mother Love, the Christmas Fairy.

The story was subsequently in 1881 printed as "Good Mother Cara and her glass slippers".

November 10, 1879. Lectured at the Central Prison to upwards of 300 convicts. Was restricted to a purely secular lecture. Indeed the ideas of the gaol governor, Captain Prince, evidently include no thought of possible moral reformation. His boast is the quantity of bricks that they make, or other industrial fruits of their labour, thereby diminishing the cost of the prison and winning credit to its governor for productive prison labour. Two things are thus to be arrived at: the quieter and more submissive they are, the less is his trouble; and the more they can be induced to do in the way of productive labour, the greater his credit. So he bribes them with tobacco, wishes to get up private theatricals for their pastime!, and scarcely conceals his contempt for religious instruction. I took him and them by guile; gave as my subject "A day in Copenhagen", presented Thorvaldsen the sculptor in his aspect as a humbly born boy, the son of a poor carpenter, who by ability and diligence won his way to honour, rank and admiration. Then in describing his great works in his fulfilment of a commission to decorate the Frue

> Kirke I was able to make its magnificent colossal figure of Christ in benediction, its twelve apostles, St. Paul, St. Peter, the doubting Thomas, etc., pegs on which to hang naturally words with a deeper meaning, that might possibly, with God's blessing, reach some poor darkened soul, and give them a motive to try for higher—nay, for highest things. . . . Our prisons I fear have little of the reformatory element in them, great as are the improvements they have undergone in recent years.

Wilson's philanthropy was no less conspicuous than his religious zeal. His heart was easily touched by distress and his purse was open to those in need. Many entries in his journal testify to his generosity even when he suspected, or more than suspected, that the applicant was undeserving. For instance—

> February 21, 1874. Jeremiah McAuliffe, emigrant, aided in some little ways on arriving. Seems a decent steady fellow, with a wife and child. Have lent him $20 towards a house he is getting up on his own lot. "Lent"? We shall see!
>
> April 13. Jeremiah McAuliffe refunds $5!
>
> March 4. 1877. Lent (?) $4 to Forbes, a poor Scotsman, on the faith of his face and his Scottish Doric. I should be sorry to think he would discredit his country. [Added later:] Which however he has done.
>
> December 12, 1884. N—— sends me pawn-ticket. He has pawned his watch and dress-coat, and wishes me to retrieve them. The last of many

demands was to borrow $6. He does not even hint at the word "borrow" having any such significance as "repay" attached to it. A shiftless Bohemian. . . . Eheu! for here too is Mr. —— to whom I have promised the "loan" of a hundred dollars. He tells me he will repay it in two years. I was once poor myself.

February 15, 1886. Returned poem, with $5, to Frank Waters, "poet", Cornwall; who claims to be another Chatterton! whom I am therefore bound to aid!

Any mishap to a friend or acquaintance disturbed him greatly:—

March 22, 1890. My poor colleague, Dr. Pike, having suffered from the explosion of a glass jar in one of his chemical experiments, has to-day to undergo the frightful operation of the removal of the right eye. . . . Poor fellow. I lost my sleep last night with the horrible operation so vividly and painfully on my mind.

But his favourite objects of philanthropic interest were the young urchins selling papers in the streets. Many of them were orphans or without proper homes, and their moral as well as material welfare demanded that some charitable effort be made for them. The Newsboys' Home was founded largely through Wilson's exertions, and he helped to maintain it during the rest of his life. Whenever funds ran low or some special emergency arose he was ready

to give a public lecture or to organize some other form of entertainment in aid of it. His journal shows some of his activities in this respect. For instance,

> November 19, 1887. To-day delivered a lecture in Convocation Hall for behoof of the Newsboys' Lodging, the funds of which have run down. Subject, "America before Columbus", receipts from lecture $196.75.

A final reference to the "Newsboys" shows him, almost within a year of his death, still busy on their behalf, in indifference to his own creature comforts.

> May 28, 1891. A weary day. Started out collecting for the Newsboys. From morning till 3 p.m. toiled at uncongenial work. Got $60, and after a cup of coffee at a restaurant spent another two hours at the Board of Trustees.

Akin to his sympathy was his keen sense of humour. In private circles he was noted for his enjoyment of fun of all kinds and his readiness to joke and laugh with the youngest of his friends. He could find opportunity also for witticisms in the most formal gatherings; the writer remembers more than one occasion on which the dignity of a Senate meeting was upset by his irrepressible sallies. Even in his journal he cannot resist some humorous comment or allusion. Many passages already quoted for their subject matter are illustrations of this pervading humour. Here is another, on a purely private matter—

Dentist. An old friend gone, after faithful years of service, but made himself very disagreeable at the last. A tender memory still survives.

Another is prompted by a public occasion:

Yesterday took the Chancellor's place at the Convocation of the University for conferring degrees in Medicine. Dr. —— characteristically catered for the gratification of an audience, the majority of whom were ladies, by a charming disquisition on amputation of the thigh, and other pleasantries of surgery.

In the earlier pages of his journal there are many references to his friends and acquaintances in Edinburgh, and in his repeated visits to his old home town nothing gave him greater joy than meeting those former associates. As time went on the inevitable thinning of the ranks took place, and in his later years it is chiefly deaths that he notes in his journal, sometimes with appropriate comment on the career or personal characteristics of the departed friend. One of these may be quoted; it is interesting both from the subject and from the light thrown on Wilson's own character and early associations.

January 24, 1876. Telegraphic news: death of my dear old friend Sir George Harvey, a very noble man of true genius and as genuine a friend as ever death took away. Alas! those dear old friends drop off one by one, and there is no replacing them. It takes the early and latter rains of a long lifetime

to mature into its ripe worth such a friendship, tried and true. When I replied to a kind sympathetic letter of his on the occasion of my brother's death, making some moan over the impossibility of my getting home, he interpreted it into a complaint of poverty and sent me £100 by return of post. I sent it back, I hope with some partial indications of all I felt. But when I did get home and referred to it, he had forgotten all about it. There was a sterling friend, if ever there was one, for £100 was not a trifle to him. Dear friend; I seem to see even now the bright flash of those fine eyes of his, which I thought of again and again when writing of Chatterton and his wonderfully brilliant eyes, which even the dull antiquary, Barrett, affirmed when he was in earnest would strike fire and kindle as it were into a blaze. So I dedicated the book to my loved friend, and that is pleasant to think of now, for it pleased him.

Early in 1877 a more severe blow fell upon him. His eldest daughter, who was married and living in England, died on March 1st. In his journal on March 17th he merely records the fact; apparently the news reached him by letter that day. He also inserted at that date the last letter he ever received from her, sent to him a fortnight before her death. There are no entries for a month, until he notes the arrival from Scotland of proofs of his *Reminiscences of Old Edinburgh,* and adds "how weary, stale and unprofitable it seems to me now", by contrast with the pleasure

with which he had read it in manuscript, chapter by chapter as it was written, to the fireside audience which included the daughter he had lost.

March 1, 1878. . . . [The anniversary of his daughter's death]. A very fatal year it has been. How my old circle does narrow. Chief Justice Draper, one of the most valued of my Canadian friends; James Drummond, whose drawing of Jessie Eleanor when she was a child I still have; James Ballantine, the poet; Dr. John Stuart, just as he had completed his share of our joint work on the Quigrich; Robert Horn, Dean of Faculty, Sir George Harvey's old friend; and then Mrs. Nelson, of whose kindnesses in youthful days memory carried me back a full half-century; and now with startling suddenness her son John whom I remember as a child. . . . In describing the zealous group of antiquarians who in 1848 looked on with curious interest while the search in Trinity College Church was in progress for the grave of Mary of Gueldres, when I penned it for the *Reminiscences of Old Edinburgh* three of those enumerated by me, David Laing, Sir George Harvey, James Drummond, still survived; but ere it issued from the press only the oldest of them, David Laing, who was an author before I was born, was left. I have dedicated it to my old friend. He is a wonderful man; an old bachelor, still busy with his pen and among his books. But he cannot survive long; and if I still remain, it will be [as] the sole representative of what was once a fine genial, hearty band of fellow-

workers in the by no means barren field of antiquarian research.

Another death which touched him near was that of the Honourable George Brown* in the spring of 1880, as a result of an attempted assassination. It will be remembered that they had been schoolfellows in Edinburgh, and they continued to be on terms of special intimacy in Canada, both on account of their early association and also because of Wilson's close friendship with the Nelson family of which Mrs. Brown was a member. Wilson's journal contains more than one reference to Brown, but the most interesting occurs on April 23rd, a little more than three weeks after the shot was fired from the effects of which Brown died on May 9th.

> On returning last night at a late hour from inquiring for George Brown found a cable message from William Nelson, "Is George in danger?" Have replied: "In great danger, still hope". It is difficult to ascertain his actual state; but I have seen him now more than once. His case seems precarious indeed, and his state such that even if he should recover I much fear it will be to feebleness

* George Brown (1818-1880), born and educated in Edinburgh. He came to America with his father in 1838 and with him embarked on a career of journalism, for a year or two in New York, then in Toronto. The first publication that they undertook in Toronto was called the *Banner*, a weekly Presbyterian journal. But in 1844 the *Globe* was started, first as a weekly, then bi-weekly and tri-weekly, and finally as a daily. He was in the Parliament of Canada both before and after the formation of the Dominion, but not continuously.

and premature old age. A warm-hearted, impulsive, sanguine man; most generous and kindly in all social relations, and with a wonderful power of banishing care. I fancy that in his own home circle his presence has been a perpetual sunshine.

A yet greater sorrow was in store for him. In November, 1885, Mrs. Wilson died suddenly. The journal entry of November 19, 1887, has already been quoted in part, recording the financial results of his lecture on that date in aid of the Newsboys' Home. He continues thus—

> Just two years ago on this day I laid my loved one in her last earthly resting-place, and the Saturday thereafter completed the three lectures on Browning for the same object. The previous Saturday she was there among my auditors.

Those who were present at the third lecture thus alluded to, which was faithfully delivered on the Saturday after Mrs. Wilson's death, will remember the changed appearance of the lecturer, his haggard face, weak voice and hesitating movements, all testifying to the severity of the blow that had fallen upon him.

Among the many calls upon Wilson's time perhaps correspondence, unnecessary correspondence, was the most irksome. He was President in the days before typewriters, if not before shorthand-writers, and all his letters were written with his own hand. Occasionally he finds it worth while to record a com-

munication, interesting or amusing, which has reached him and been answered. Soon after Alfred Russell Wallace had delivered a lecture at the University on Darwinism there occurs the following entry in the journal.

> March 28, 1887. Dr. Wallace and Darwinism, and University College, have come under discussion as I expected. Long letters in the papers. But here comes a long letter to myself from one of our own graduates. He protests against the use of our Convocation Hall for sustaining "a theory having for its aim the overthrow of the doctrine of a Creator and the establishment of atheism". Having so delivered his proem Mr. —— thus proceeds: "Through the beneficent teaching of the Holy Spirit I am, I believe, enabled to explain some of the mysteries regarding the Creation which, so far as I am aware, have not hitherto been comprehended, particularly with regard to the time occupied in it, which is evidently necessary to be understood in order to a proper understanding of the theory of evolution. I would say then that, as I understand it, the whole time occupied in the Creation, from the beginning to the creation of Adam, was 41,996 years, and to the creation of Eve 42,000 years, the day of Creation being 7000 years. This proposition, which is I believe new to the world, leads of course to the conclusion that the Sabbath of God was also 7000 years, which is equally true, being that period allotted to man on earth before

the final destruction", etc., etc. I have written the good man a soothing little note, and I shall be well pleased if I hear no more about it.

Another curious cosmological speculation came under his notice not long afterwards.

July 18, 1887. A visit from Rev. —— to introduce to me a gentleman who had established to his own entire satisfaction the source and duration of the inter-glacial period, and submitted to me the modest request that I should read over a bulky manuscript which he produced, and give him my opinion as to its value. I pled ignorance of the full compass of the subject, want of time, etc. But what were his special qualifications and training? Was he a geologist, or a physicist, or what? No. He did not pretend to more than the reading of some popular works. I demurred to the probability, under such circumstances, of his finding a satisfactory solution of so difficult a problem; but would he briefly explain to me his theory? Oh yes, it was very simple. The interglacial period began when the sun stood still upon Gibeon and hasted not to go down about a whole day, until Joshua had smitten the Amorites in the valley of Ajalon. This derangement of the solar system originated the inter-glacial period which lasted until the shadow went back ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz to furnish a token of confirmation to King Hezekiah. Mr. —— told me that he had read the manuscript carefully

through—it formed a pretty thick volume—and he thought his friend had proved his theory very satisfactorily. I bowed the worthy gentlemen out as graciously as possible, pleading the impossibility of giving the needful time to the study of the novel solution.

But he also had letters more to his taste. The following in reference to John Stuart Blackie, professor of Greek in Edinburgh University, may be interesting to those who are familiar with that worthy's multifarious writings.

May 30, 1887. Letter from D. D[ouglas] with news of my eccentric old friend Professor J. S. Blackie. He writes thus: "I met Blackie this morning as fresh and lively as ever. He told me he had just finished his Autobiography, which would be published after his death: Strange volatile mortal, with many loving qualities". The autobiography will be spicy, full of extravagancies, and free-spoken without doubt about many contemporaries, and very free-spoken above all about himself; a very amusing, readable volume. In early life he was under very earnest religious impressions, but he drifted away into very hazy idealisms. It is scarcely possible for a man to draw his own picture truthfully. There is a touch of vanity in the very idea of an autobiography. When I was with Blackie in Oban in 1878 he put into my hands at parting a copy of his *Wise men of Greece,* inscribed "To Dr. D. W. in grateful remembrance

of past favours", and enclosed I found this characteristic note which I stuck into the volume: "My dear Wilson, I send you herewith my *Wise Men of Greece,* which, so far as I can judge, is the best book I have published in verse; and my best prose work, according to the judgment of esteemed friends, is my *Four Phases of Morals*". And then after this characteristic critique on his own writings he kindly adds, in remembrance of my exertions on his behalf when candidate for the Edinburgh Chair, "That I have had opportunity to write them and to launch them into the world under favourable auspices, I owe more to you than to any other person, and am not one to forget obligations". A genial, lovable eccentric child of undoubted genius, but lacking balance; a clipper, all top-sails and no ballast; at times a jury-mast and no rudder.

September 12, 1887. To-day's English mail brings me a kindly letter from my old friend J. S. Blackie, with his wonted greeting ἀληθεύων ἐν ἀγάπῃ. He appeals to a fine ballad I have just been reading in the August Blackwood, *Socrates,* in proof of a still busy pen; and adds "My legs are, naturally, not as strong as they were; but my eyes, and my ears, and my lungs, and my tongue are in better condition than an old gentleman of 78 has any right to expect". It is peculiarly welcome to receive the kindly greetings of a survivor of the old circle, just as I am keenly feeling the great and irreparable blank [the death of William Nelson]. But 78! I must hasten to reply to my genial old friend ere it be too late.

A letter from another distinguished man arrived soon after, and is duly noted and criticized.

November 8, 1887. Long letter to-day from Hawarden Castle. Gladstone finds leisure to discuss at length *The Lost Atlantis*, in acknowledging my paper on the subject [published in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada for 1886]. He appeals to Homer in confirmation of his ideas as to geological changes whereby central Europe was submerged during the human period. I had noted this idea already in his *Juventus Mundi*. But his geological ideas are amazingly crude, and his conception of geological time is evidently such as could be embraced in a few additional centuries. But he is at home with Homer.

A lighter touch to his correspondence is provided by the following.

March 26, 1888. Amused by receipt of a letter from New York. An unknown Yankee cousin claims kin. Mrs. Julia Nelson writes: "I am distantly related to the great Christopher North, Professor John Wilson of Edinburgh". She has only recently learned that old Christopher North has a brother living in America, at Toronto; and so she proceeds to tell me about our kinship. Possibly had I claimed kin with the belligerent old *Blackwood* reviewer and Tory assailant I might have sworn by the great man. But having no other relationship than our belonging to the very miscellaneous Wilson clan I have always wondered what

people found to admire in his literary productions; or what he did, other than being a most truculent Tory penman, to merit the beautiful statue by Steell in the Princes Street gardens. Any reviewer who wrote in his style now would be excluded from the pages of all but the most virulent party hack journals. But the name has got a halo of glory about it, and his fame is taken on trust by hundreds, if not thousands, who never have read more than perhaps the single sonnet of *A Cloud*. As for his *Isle of Palms*, better poems are written and forgotten yearly. My fair cousin goes on to say, "I have long wanted to possess something that had belonged to Professor J. Wilson; would it be asking you too much to send me some little trifling thing, a pen that he had written with, or his autograph, or any little thing that had belonged to the great man"; and then the good lady becomes complimentary to myself. Could she have my own photo? She is herself of distinguished race in other ways, married Dr. Nelson, "son of Dr. Robert Nelson, of Montreal, the most celebrated physician of his time; who, with his brother Dr. Wolfred Nelson, headed the rebellion in Canada in 1837". What would the famous old Edinburgh Tory have thought of such rebel kith and kin? I must have been the younger brother surely; for I see that old Christopher—whom I remember very well, with his flowing locks and leonine head—was born 18th of May, 1785, i.e. just 103 years ago. I am getting somewhat venerable myself, but that sounds a little

more like my father's than my brother's birthday, as this worshipful cousin might have surmised for herself. But she will be contented with his ox or his ass, or anything that was his.

In spite of the unfavourable view he takes of Christopher North, Wilson's literary sympathies were very wide and comprehensive. He notes in an early entry (August 9, 1862) that he lay under a tree by the riverside all the morning, at a country place where he was staying, "reading Artemus Ward". His admiration of Tennyson, as shown in the extracts which relate his meeting with the poet, to be given in the next chapter, is natural and indeed inevitable for a Victorian, but he also highly appreciated Browning, and the following extract is interesting, not only for that reason but for the side-light upon Goldwin Smith.

December 14, 1889. Browning is dead, a poet whose writings have long been a source of intense pleasure to me. But he was in his 78th year; his work was done, and now he will live. Goldwin Smith sat next me at dinner, and in his dogmatic way denounced Browning, whose writings it is obvious he had never studied as they need to be studied to be understood and enjoyed. His objective power and realization of manifold varieties of character is altogether marvellous. It is Shakespearean.

He has admiring reminiscences of another and now almost forgotten poet and painter:

> December 20, 1890. Note the death of William Bell Scott, poet, artist, son of the old Edinburgh engraver, Robert Scott, and brother of the strange perverse genius David Scott, whose huge canvases were a grief and perplexity in the old days when I was art critic for the *Scotsman*. His brother W.B.S. was my senior by four years. We met in London when both were sanguine dreamers. He was a true poet, and with more adaptability than his brother. . . . W.B.S. painted his "Jester" the year of my marriage. . . . By and by he took a lead among the pre-Raphaelites, but I returned to Edinburgh, and now look back over half a century to the memory of early pleasant hours with a kindly, simple and very genuine man of true genius, great poetic sensibility, and a devout earnestness of the old Scottish Puritan, or rather Covenanting, type.

Amid all the worries and responsibilities of those later years of his presidency Wilson found time to put together a couple of volumes containing papers contributed for the most part to antiquarian and scientific periodicals. One of these appeared in 1891 and was entitled *The Right Hand: Lefthandedness,* which was the title of the first paper, reprinted from the Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada. Wilson was himself a left-handed man, although the

usual training of schools had given him equal facility with both hands. It was not uncommon for him in his lectures to write upon the blackboard with either hand indifferently, being influenced, it seemed, chiefly by the nearness of the chalk to one or the other. At meetings of a sketching club of which he was a leading member he easily outstripped other members in the rapidity with which he could dash off an imaginative sketch in the half hour allowed for the competitive drawing, because he manipulated a pencil in each hand, and foliage or shading could be filled in by both working simultaneously. From his own experience he was much interested in the question of the origin of left-handedness, and of the effect of ambidexterity on the brain. His favourite theory was that the use of either hand at will, where most people use only the right, must produce an equal development of both lobes of the brain, and thus diminish the fatigue which with ordinary persons falls upon one lobe only. The other volume, entitled *The Lost Atlantis, and other ethnographic studies,* appeared after his death.

But he undertook a much more onerous task when he acceded, with much misgiving, to the request of the widow of his old friend, William Nelson, to write a memoir of her husband. William Nelson was his closest friend, the companion of his school

days, the publisher who assisted his struggle for livelihood as a young man by commissioning him to write the many historical "pot-boilers" which later in life he so willingly ignored. In the spring of 1882, when Wilson's health seemed breaking down under the strain of his new duties as President of University College, the journal contains the following entry:

> May 27. On coming home find a cable message from my old friend William Nelson. He has heard of my illness and of my proposed crossing and tells me he has taken Cowdenknowes, a lovely place near Melrose, where he bids me join him. Nothing could be kinder or more welcome.

On September 11th, 1887, Wilson records the death of this old friend as follows—

> Startled by a visit from Mr. J. C[ameron] of the *Globe* with a telegram announcing the death of my dear old friend William Nelson. Sudden, I imagine, but the harsh abruptness of telegraphic communication comes with cruel brevity. I was just about to reply to a long letter which reached me while in the New Hampshire highlands and which I could not answer till I got back to my books. He was my oldest and dearest surviving friend, and such a friend ! No brother could be truer. Kindly, guileless, genuine, one of the shrewdest of business men, and yet tender-hearted as a girl. W.N. was my junior only by some few months. Edinburgh will no longer be to me the

old place, now that my life-long friend is gone. I penned a notice of him at Mr. Cameron's request, but how inadequate. Memory carries me back wellnigh 60 years, when William and I used to walk together as schoolmates, with our arms over each other's shoulders; and in many later phases of life we still were true to each other.

A few months later came the request for a Memoir.

December 23, 1887. Letter from Mrs. Nelson. She wants me to write a memoir of my old friend, which I shall willingly do if I can recover incidents to give life to it. But a mere piece of eulogy, however sincere, if expanded into a memoir is a poor tribute to the memory of a good man, as dear William most assuredly was. It is only for private circulation. But shall I be able to satisfy the ideal of my dear friend Mrs. N. as a memorial of her husband ?

Wilson found it a difficult task. Subsequent entries show that his doubts as expressed in the foregoing entry were well founded. He was forced to reject much correspondence, which though precious to the widow included no "incidents" worth recording. He lost no time however about completing his task.

May 3, 1888. To-day I have completed the final chapter of the memoir of my old friend William Nelson. It has been hard on me for it has been done in the snatches of time amid many interruptions.

For some reason, perhaps dissatisfaction with the picture drawn by Wilson, the Memoir was a long time in printing. Wilson writes in his journal—

> June 3, 1889. Thirteen months ago, on May 3rd, completed the memoir of my old friend and schoolfellow, W.N., sent it off to Mrs. Nelson, and on the 9th wrote to T.N. about the printing of it. So far the thing has been burked and all my labour thrown away. Have written him to-day, asking if there is any prospect of its issuing from the press. Last September I feared that the proofs might come to hand in my busiest time. Probably I may spare myself any such anxiety for next September. But my eyes grow dim, so that the sooner I get a bit of elaborate proof-reading over the better.
>
> August 21. Home to-day from a very enjoyable holiday. Had the satisfaction at last of receiving a first instalment of the proofs of my Memoir.
>
> January 2, 1890. Copies of *William Nelson, a Memoir,* to hand at last. The little volume is nicely brought out, though with some liberties with the text that annoy me. If however it gratifies dear Mrs. Nelson I shall be content. For myself it is the laurel and the cypress laid together on the grave of a generous and loved friend.

It is remarkable evidence of Wilson's mental vigour and unquenchable zeal that we find him at the end of his life, in the midst of all his practical preoccupations, bent on improving his lectures.

March 9, 1891. Have fagged to-day at two lectures, one for my Second Year on the reign of Edward III, the era of Chaucer and William of Wykeham, and also of the Black Prince, and Crecy and Poictiers: and the other for my Third Year's men on the war of the Spanish Succession and the brilliant Augustan age of that poor royal mediocrity Queen Anne, a charming subject—both indeed charming themes, if one had time. But the burning of my whole 37 years of accumulated lecture notes has been very hard on me. Started afresh; and each day is a scramble in spite of a tolerably well stored memory. But the old spirit is wanting with which I used to sketch out a new lecture and look to polishing and giving it poignancy in future years. I cannot hope for such now.

March 20. Have been reading up the 16th century history and with special care what could be had about Henry VIII. So finding my correspondence unusually small this forenoon, I devoted it to a lecture on Temp. Henry VIII for my Fourth Year. I have already treated of the period to my present class, so it is for next year—if at all. I realize fully the irony of a man in his 76th year presuming thus to provide for a year ahead.

These later years of Wilson's life were distinguished by two honours bestowed upon him, knighthood, and the freedom of the City of Edinburgh. The former was not accepted gratefully; indeed it was resolutely refused until further resistance would

have been unworthy of him, and inconsiderate to the friends who had been instrumental in obtaining it for him. A portion of the correspondence and of the journal entries on the subject are of interest as revealing Wilson's motives, first in refusing, then in accepting knighthood. These have been misunderstood and in some quarters misinterpreted to his disadvantage. In these extracts his disinterestedness will appear beyond question.

June 2, 1888. A telegram from Sir John A. Macdonald, announcing my promotion by Her Majesty to the rank of Knighthood. Replied:

My dear Sir John:

Have just received your telegram and beg to return you my hearty thanks for your kind congratulations on the honour offered to me. . . . I trust you will not think that I put any slight upon them [i.e. Sir John's services in submitting his name to her Majesty] in asking permission to decline the rank of Knight Bachelor. I assume that I have been selected for this mark of Royal favour rather from my official position, as in some sense the representative of letters and science, than from my personal claims. I feel therefore that if letters and science are to be distinguished by a mark of Royal favour it ought not to be less than that which is conferred on men who have attained to eminence in political life. I am an old antiquary, very familiar with the relative value of the various Orders of Knighthood and could scarce feel my-

self to have received a distinction in the acceptance of a title that would stamp me with inferiority in the presence of any K.C.M.G. of the Dominion or elsewhere. . . .

June 5. A letter from Sir John A. Macdonald discloses the fact, which I had not realized before, that it is to Lord Lansdowne's interposition that I owe my offer of knighthood. Feel annoyed at the possibility of seeming to do a churlish act in return for his constant courtesy; thought for a moment of accepting, rather than wound his feelings, but I cannot overcome my repugnance to such a sham knighthood as the mere Bachelor title amounts to, and so I shall adhere to my first resolution. And in truth knighthood in any form could only be a trouble to me. Were it worth having at all, it comes too late; but truly the title of President is more honour by far.

July 7. Receive to-day a mysterious cable message from the Attorney General. "London, July 7. Please reserve answering negatively my last week's letter until you receive another written to-day".

July 9. The riddle is solved sooner than I expected by the arrival of letter No. 1, and also a most kind remonstrance from Lord Lansdowne which places me in a most unpleasant predicament. I cannot accept the title now, and yet it seems ungracious and indeed churlish—after his exertions to obtain it for me—that I should refuse. As to the Attorney General his interposition on my be-

half has been most kind. I must tarry to learn what more No. 2 may have to say, but the whole matter is a bother and a nuisance.

July 11. Find myself on the horns of a dilemma. When Lord Lansdowne condescends to appeal to me as a friend not to compromise him by refusing an honour which he exerted himself to induce Her Majesty to confer on me as a special mark of favour, what can I do? I have in a long letter of explanation and apology to him offered this compromise: "In writing to Lord Knutsford I did not refuse the dignity conferred by Her Majesty but simply asked permission to retain my present style. At this late date, after the subject has been matter of comment in the press and elsewhere, I fear it is impossible for me to assume the title. But I gladly respond by every possible concession to your Excellency's request. I have already written to a London agent to pay my fees at the College of Heralds, and by this same mail I write to Lord Knutsford unconditionally accepting the offered dignity."

July 16. The Attorney General's letter reaches me to-day, but it does not greatly change the aspect of affairs, except in so far as it indicates that Lord Knutsford as well as Lord Lansdowne exerted himself on behalf of the ungracious recipient of Royal favour. The whole matter is a tangled business at best. A word from Lord Lansdowne the last day I dined with him would have saved both him and me a world of bother. But his motives

were the most kind and courteous. My letter to Sir J.A.M. was a huge mistake. The probabilities are that he only yielded reluctantly in a matter which, being non-political, the Governor General felt himself at liberty to press.

September 11. To-day the stupid business of knighthood has been brought to an end by my surrender. Lord Stanley, our new Governor General, visited the University and I had to read the loyal address from the Faculty and graduates. As he told me afterwards, he was fully informed of the correspondence that had passed between me and the authorities at home. He had no doubt got a hint to press the matter, which he did effectually by, in his reply, congratulating me and the University on the dignity conferred by Her Majesty. To persist in further refusal would be liable to misinterpretation in a way displeasing to me; so I give in, and here I am knighted after all.

The second honour conferred on him, the freedom of the City of Edinburgh, was much more to his taste, and gratified him exceedingly as a recognition from the old home of his boyhood and early manhood. It was an event of the last year of his life, which forms the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE LAST YEAR

THE last summer of Wilson's life was devoted to a visit to England and Scotland. His remaining friends in Edinburgh seized the opportunity of paying him some special honour. At the request of the Curator of the National Portrait Gallery he sat for his portrait to Sir George Reid. A replica of the admirable triple heads then painted was executed later by the artist for the University of Toronto and now hangs in the President's room in Simcoe Hall. The frontispiece to this volume is from that painting. The artist's own account of the circumstances under which the picture was conceived and carried out is given in the following letter to the writer.

Edinburgh, April 24, 1909.

. . . You know the circumstances under which the various portraits were painted? I think it was on the occasion of Sir Daniel Wilson's last visit to Edinburgh. I met him at dinner one evening at the house of Mr. Nelson, publisher. Sir Noel Paton, Professor Blackie, Professor Masson, and some of his old Edinburgh friends were there, and it was suggested by some one that I should make a

sketch of his head the following day. He came and sat for two hours and sketch no. 1 was made, and on the two following days sketches nos. 2 and 3. They were handed over to the keeping of the Society of Antiquaries on the understanding that after Sir Daniel Wilson's death they should be transferred to the National Portrait Gallery, which engagement was duly carried out.

But a more gratifying mark of honour was the presentation to Wilson of the freedom of the City of Edinburgh by the Mayor and Council. Nothing could have been more acceptable or, it may be said, more fully deserved. He had been from his boyhood a most loyal and devoted son of that famous city, and as an artist and antiquary had done good service in illustrating its history and depicting its ancient buildings. Moreover he had been the first to discover the great antiquity of St. Margaret's Chapel in the Castle precincts, and it was by his influence and efforts that it was preserved and restored. He had had a successful career as an educational leader in a British colony, and his influential position in his new home had been recognized by the Sovereign in the bestowal of knighthood. It was natural and highly suitable that at this time, when his public career was manifestly drawing to a close, the mother city should distinguish him among the most eminent of her sons. Wilson's journal account of this

summer holiday in the old country merely mentions with gratification the presentation of the freedom of Edinburgh, but gives a long account of what seems to have interested him far more, a series of visits to Lord Tennyson in his Sussex retreat. As a record of Tennyson's conversation and opinions the whole account is worth quoting.

> But the crowning delight [of the summer] was my introduction to the Poet Laureate, and the pleasant visits that followed to his pretty summer home of Aldworth on the southern slope of Blackdown, with its outlook on the British Channel, a realization as it seemed to me of the "Vivian-place" the poet describes towards the close of his *Princess,* no lordly hall, but a chaste modest poet's nest. . . . After some converse with [Lady Tennyson] I was taken to the library—upstairs—where the poet was resting on a sofa. I found him full of interest about Canada, and I had great pleasure in disabusing him of the idea that the Canadian people are bent on deserting England and casting in their lot with the U.S. republicans. Tennyson had followed the example of Lord Salisbury, and, as he told me, had sent a congratulatory telegram to Sir John A. Macdonald, to which he got no reply. He was evidently piqued. I wonder whom Sir John fancied his message came from. I did my best for Canada's premier, assuring the Laureate that either message or reply must have miscarried, the signature prob-

ably bungled in transmission. They were thinking at Ottawa of politicians—not poets.

Spoke of Emerson and Longfellow, in strong terms of admiration of the latter. Much interested in New England and its people, but broke out with indignant sarcasm about the intrusions of American interviewers. The poet is a little deaf, and on catching an inkling of what one of their interviewers was after, he dismissed him—as Mr. Hallam Tennyson said—in this summary fashion: "I don't know who you are, and I cannot make out a word you say". Was eager for information about the French Canadians. Reverting to Edinburgh Tennyson gave me an amusing description of a visit he had from Professor Blackie. He described him as taking hold of his coat-tails and skipping about the room like a girl in a minuet; which any one familiar with the ways of the eccentric Grecian can readily imagine. "All sail and no ballast" was Carlyle's epigrammatic description of him. He had challenged Tennyson's "grey metropolis of the north" as a slander on Scott's "romantic town"; though I was grieved to note the smoky atmosphere that hides the distant landscape and makes the epithet only too fitting. But Tennyson's retort was, "Well, take your reprisals. Call London the black metropolis of the south!" As I was leaving he inquired about Goldwin Smith, "that nuisance". He is evidently keenly sensitive about any movement tending to detach the colonies from the motherland, and when I expressed

the idea that we must anticipate the time "far on in summers that we shall not see"—quoting his own line—when England must be content to be the Mother of Nations, and see the colonies that she has planted in every quarter of the globe go forth like sons from their father's house to set up for themselves, he resented the idea, and claimed imperial unity as a higher destiny for both.

On the 6th [of August] Tennyson entered on his 82nd birthday. Sybil and I walked over on the following afternoon, but the poet was unwell and had lain down. Left our cards and turned away a little disappointed. Before we reached the gate of the avenue a servant followed us with a request from Mr. Tennyson to return. We were taken to an upper room and there introduced to the poet's daughter-in-law, to Dean Bradley, Stanley's successor in the Abbey, and to Mr. Lecky, the historian of the 18th century. The Dean, a bright kindly man, asked after Goldwin Smith. "Ah! he was always a pessimist. Give him my kindest greetings, and tell him that it is still a source of pride to me to remember that I stood next below him in the class list at Oxford". The historian was pleasant, but he did not impress [me] with the idea of his being a man of any breadth.

Tuesday, 11th August. I gave the forenoon to Mr. Lowes Dickinson to make a study of my head in chalk. Walked over in the afternoon to Aldworth and spent a delightful hour with the poet and Lady Tennyson. The latter evidently sympathizes keenly in her husband's passion for

imperial unity, and his dislike of "a rampant democracy". A little incident brought out a characteristic trait. He referred to a stanza in his second Locksley Hall and emphasizing a line of it said, "That is the line of mine which above all others I most wish the world to hear". I asked him to repeat the stanza that I might note it down, when he took the little note-book out of my hand and himself wrote the line—

"Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying while
they shout her name".

I received back the note-book, and after reading the line closed it, and put it in my breast-pocket; when Tennyson said in a curiously emphatic manner, "I discover in you a token of magnanimity which commends you to my higher estimation". "May I presume to ask what that is?" I inquired. "You did not ask me to sign my name". And then he told me how he was pestered with endless letters and applications for his autograph, "and now", said he, "that they have taken to selling the letters of living men I get my son to reply to any that are to be answered. But the pile is out of all proportion to the possibility of replying, if indeed they merited any reply". He seemed sensitive and irritated on the subject of interviews, intrusive visitors, and autograph-hunters, whom he characterized as unblushing nuisances. He invited me to sit close to him, as his hearing is a little defective. It is the only trace of failing. He walks firmly, and speaks fluently, with touches of sardonic humour, and sharp denunciations of unpalatable traits. He

has grown conservative, in the sense in which age develops that feeling; but it is no such revulsion of feeling and sympathies as that of Wordsworth. He surprised me with the remark that he could never understand why the Queen showed such regard for that upstart charlatan Napoleon III, and for Empress Eugénie. After Sedan, he said, Louis Napoleon was ready and intrigued to join Germany against England.

Another item of this time may have some historical significance.

Mr. Lowes Dickinson told me that he sat next Lowell at a quiet little dinner-party, after he had been superseded as the Ambassador to St. James's by Mr. Phillips [*sic*]*. Lowell stated that the American-Irish were the real stirrers up of all the trouble about the Canadian fisheries, and that he knew for a fact that Blaine had fitted out two fishing vessels purposely to stir up mischief.

On his return to Toronto at the end of this memorable summer Wilson held his last Convocation. Here is his journal entry.

October 1, 1891. Have put off our Convocation to Monday the 5th. It is a hard push, but I am resolved to have our University Convocation in the restored building, in the old library where we banqueted under the presidency of Sir Edmund Head, and dedicated the building to its high purpose—the triumphant close of our long struggle—on 4th October, 1858.

* The successor to Lowell was Edward John Phelps.

For the remainder of the University year Wilson was struggling against overwork as well as failing faculties. Although the restoration of the College building was almost completed, and the new library also nearly finished, there was abundant worry in connection with financial reconstruction and with the ever present effort to counter political intrigue in the matter of University appointments. The following are characteristic entries.

October 10, 1891. Home late last night from a protracted meeting of the Senate, followed by a long *sederunt* of the Medical Board. —— was so very bland and conciliatory, and so demonstrative in his self-abnegation and desire to yield to everybody, that I was sure there was some knavery behind it. A private interview with the Chancellor, and sundry revelations innocently disclosed by —— to Sybil, let me into the secret, happily in time, as I hope, to prevent our losing Macallum. The Chancellor is keenly alive to the double-dealing and trickery by which the University is being used for political ends. I am glad to find myself at work with an honest, straightforward ally. I do detest having to deal with tricksters.

December 22, 1891. A long interview to-day with the Attorney General. A Registrar has to be appointed, and the Minister composedly tells me there are seven or more candidates, but does not seem to think it necessary that I should be con-

sulted, though a bad appointment will involve me in daily trouble and vexation.

February 12, 1892. The above item [on February 4th on a personal matter] is the sole entry since Christmas. The holidays had been eagerly longed for, for I was staggering along under a burdensome load. From my return in September endless committees, Board meetings, Councils, Senate, etc., left me never a moment's leisure. My old afternoon walks—generally to St. James' cemetery—had become an impossibility, and a little pause and rest was as water to the desert wanderer under tropical skies. But alas! Mr. A. Staveley Hill, Q.C., M.P., treasurer of the London committee for restoration of our University Library announced his coming. I had to give up my [Saturday] holiday walk to him. A wretched day of chill rain spent with him in inspecting the new library building was the origin of what ended in congestion of the lungs, and nearly made an end of me. A fortnight is oblivion to me. Then came a time when I realized my condition, on the verge of the dark river. . . . It was with a sense of regret that I realized some faint return of strength and thought that I had all the hard journey to retrace.

April 14. Engaged Charles A. Stuart to take my Second and Third years' history lecturing from March 1st to end of term. He entered on his duties on the 2nd, has given four lectures a week, and to-day surprises me by announcing that his work is done. He has given 25 lectures.

The spring months were enlivened by discussions in the Senate about the institution of the abortive Park Hospital. Wilson's account is interesting.

May 7, 1892. At a meeting of the Trustees of the Park Hospital, the second this week. The late Hon. John Macdonald gave $40,000 and in his will bequeathed $60,000 additional, for the founding of a hospital for the sick. . . . The V.C. took matters in hand, consulted nobody, got the transfer of Wycliffe College at an extravagant price, $60,000, borrowed the $20,000 on mortgage on the faith of the legacy, gave—or rather got the signature of the Minister of Education to—a lease of 999 years for the adjoining lots on College Street. Now, as it seems, the will cannot be enforced. It was executed within a month of the testator's death. The inception of the hospital is not likely to commend itself to the goodwill of reluctant executors, and now it seems likely that the legality of the will is to be challenged and payment refused. The Park Hospital promised to be a valuable adjunct to our restored Medical Faculty. But in this, as in all else connected with the Medical Faculty, I have had no say. The V.C. was resolved to have all the honour and glory—and also such political and other influences as his assumed services would carry with them. So now he has to bear the burden of blame of a mismanaged affair. The University Board of Trustees and the Minister both complain of being betrayed into confirmation of a perpetual lease, when the most they thought of was one for the re-

maining twelve years of the Wycliffe College lease of its lots. Such was my own belief, but at the same time the renewal of the lease necessarily followed; so that too much is being made of this. At the best we are guilty of culpable ignorance all round, as the lease seems to have been laid on the table but never opened out or read by any one. As however the V.C. has chosen to take the entire conduct of the Medical Faculty and all that concerns it into his own hands, he must not complain if he gets the lion's share of blame as well as of credit. Only now do I learn of terms with the Medical professors and lecturers as to salaries, pensions, appointment of Dean, Secretary, etc., etc. An open and straightforward course at first would have averted much trouble and some very threatening dangers now.

May 14. Got to bed near midnight after a protracted meeting at the Senate. A long fight over the reconstruction report on the Medical Faculty. . . . But the field-night was to have been the onslaught . . . on the poor V.C. His underhand dealings about the new Biological, the Medical Faculty, the Park Hospital, etc., etc., by which he counted on securing all the glory to himself, now brings down on his devoted head the Government, the Senate, the Board of Trustees, the Park Hospital Trustees, and even the ungrateful Medical Faculty. Answers from the Trustees, the architect, etc., to a score of questions framed by his enemies were read, and then the Senate adjourned towards mid-

night, without affording the V.C. a chance to reply. Perhaps it was better for him that it should be so. But that was not his opinion. He is being badly dealt with—shamefully indeed by one former ally. I was sorry for him. But I have little reason to champion him, and am happily irresponsible for any share in his doings or even knowledge of them.

June 4. Travelled from Ottawa by the night train to attend a meeting of the University Senate. A bitter assault on the V.C. who had laid himself open to reasonable indignation by high-handed and secret acts combined. But the personal malice of some of his assailants . . . seemed to me so contemptible that—though he had small claim on me for any courtesy—I took his side and voted his acquittal.

June 14. A letter from Ottawa enclosing a cabinet photo of Mr. Mulock with the announcement in advance of his intention now to sever his connection with the University. He accompanies it with expressions of "gratitude for the aid so generously rendered" to him, as well as for my "gentle forbearance on many occasions". Altogether he writes in a spirit of courtesy and kindliness which wholly disarms me, and makes me look back with pleasure on my vote on the motion in the Senate relieving him from censure for his policy of secrecy in relation to the Medical Faculty and its accommodation in the Biological building, of which I had good cause to complain.

From the foregoing extracts, as from many other, may be learned Wilson's essential disapproval of the policy and practices of the Vice-Chancellor with whom he had been associated ever since their elevation, almost at the same time, to their respective positions. But the natural generosity of Wilson's nature is also seen in his pleasure at the grateful acknowledgment by the Vice-Chancellor of his vote in the Senate on the motion of censure. The slight involved in the systematic omission to consult Wilson on matters connected with the Medical Faculty seems unnecessary and ill-advised. There may however have been deliberate policy in thus passing him over, in addition to the undoubted antagonism between the two men. The claim of Wilson to be President of the University had been openly challenged by the Vice-Chancellor, who appealed to the Federation Act to confirm his opinion that while Wilson, as Principal of University College, was *ex officio* President of the University Council, there was no such officer as President of the University. The Act lends itself to such a view. But Wilson had received his commission from the Crown appointing him President of the University, and he insisted upon his right to that title. The Vice-Chancellor abandoned the argument, but tacitly, as the above extracts reveal, ignored the claim and treated him systematically as the head only of

University College, or at the most of the Arts Faculty of the University as well, and in no way responsible for, or entitled to a voice on matters relating to the Medical Faculty.

The intended retirement of the Vice-Chancellor, forecast by his letter to Wilson, was postponed by the startling news that the Chancellor, Mr. Edward Blake, was leaving Canada to take up the cause of Home Rule for Ireland as a Nationalist member of the Imperial Parliament. Wilson's comment on the news shows also his high opinion of the character and merits of the Chancellor.

> June 16, 1892. Our Chancellor, Hon. E. Blake, had a long interview when last home with Mr. Gladstone and Lord Rosebery, and here comes the astounding news that he is offered an Irish seat in the Imperial Parliament by the anti-Parnellite Home Rulers. I saw him this morning and in spite of his reticence I suspect the bait is too tempting. He will accept. He will leave us in the lurch in University matters, for he has carried us halfway in a grand borrowing scheme, and inaugurated a system of financial intermeddling by the Senate which demands his strong hand to keep it within bounds. Altogether the move is a perplexing one. I wish he would stay where he is. He is a man of fine capacity and great integrity. I fear he will find it hard to work with the wild Irish factions and the intolerable element of the priests.

After these vexed questions of University management had been settled for the present Wilson's attention was once more forcibly directed to his own failing powers.

> June 25, 1892. A long confidential talk with my good friend Dr. Hoskin. I begin to think it will be wise for me to resign the presidency, if I can make reasonable terms for retiring. Eyesight fails me sadly. Health at present is very unsatisfactory, but that, I hope, my holiday in the mountains may set right. . . . When I get back from the mountains in September I shall be able to come to a determinate conclusion.

The reference to defective eyesight is not now made for the first time. It had been a matter of anxiety for some years as the following earlier entries show.

> October 15, 1888. After having consulted both Dr. Reeve and Dr. Ryerson about my failing vision, saw Dr. Burnham to-day and learned from him what I suspected for some time: that cataract is forming on my eyes, and that inevitable blindness awaits me before long, unless the happy release comes before to dismiss me to that land where there is no more night.
>
> November 3, 1888. A long consultation with Dr. Reeve about my eyes. It is beyond question that the sight of my right eye is gone. If I close my left eye I "see men as trees walking", that is

really all. And the left eye, I fear, is going the same way, at what rate the doctor will be able to say somewhere about Christmas. He talks with pleasant composure about gouging out my eyes, by an operation that in a certain number of cases succeeds.

November 15, 1888. Blindness seems my inevitable fate. Reading has become extremely difficult, and with one eye absolutely at an end. How little we can guess at what passes in another's mind. I meet the professors daily, lecture to my classes, take part in Senate meetings, committees, etc., aye, and joke and banter too; and yet haunted all the while by the spectre that haunts me even in my dreams.

April 13, 1889. Lectures will be over for the season next week. When I fully realized in November last that my sight was so hopelessly failing me I abandoned hope of further literary work. Beyond the sense of light the sight of my right eye is totally gone. I cannot, with the help of the strongest magnifying glass, distinguish a letter of large print. The other eye is impeded with motes and opaque streaks. But I find I can still write—write indeed, unhappily, much easier than I can read, a very unprofitable stage to reach. . . . Now with the prospect of a little time at my command the old temptation of authorship besets me, in spite of seemingly hopeless impediments, and today I set my pen to the first lines of an oft-imagined project: "America before Columbus". What

of history had this so-called New World? Is there an Old World in the New? Perhaps my old eyes —or rather the half an eye that is left—will allow me to work out this problem in some partial way at least. At any rate I note here that on this Saturday morning I have made a beginning. If it comes to nothing there will be one book the less, and that will be something.*

There are no further references in the journal to threatening blindness. With characteristic courage, having once faced the prospect, he dismisses as far as possible the matter from his thoughts and concentrates his attention and efforts upon the work to be done while light still remains to him. In March 1890 he alludes to his labours in re-writing, after the fire, his lectures which had been destroyed. The writer can remember seeing him engaged on this task with volumes of standard histories before him which he consulted by the aid of a large magnifying glass. The progress of the disease did not prevent him from accomplishing a marvellous amount of writing. He notes with pardonable satisfaction, on May 16th, 1891,

I have this winter, in the midst of endless correspondence and meetings of all sorts, due to the restoration of the Library and the rebuildings, rewritten notes for 74 lectures to replace what per-

* This was the book which under the title *The Lost Atlantis* appeared after his death.

ished in the fire, prepared for the press and read all the proofs of my *Right Hand: Lefthandedness*, prepared also for the press my *Ethnographic Studies*, or by whatever other name I shall call my collected "Glimpses of an Old World in the New". Altogether my experience is confirmed that one does more in the spare moments of the busiest times than in all the leisure of a long vacation. For in truth the proper work of holiday-time is to be idle.

Wilson's method of writing is touched upon in this extract. It was a settled habit with him to have a scientific paper or a book of some sort always "on the stocks", and to make additions to it in those fragments of unoccupied time that are unavoidable in the lives of most professional men. The half-hours which he thus turned to account were enough for the composition of many papers on subjects such as archaeology or ethnography with which his mind was habitually occupied. A principle of composition which he adopted in order to make the best use of these odd moments was to leave off in the middle of a sentence. By this means he found it easier on the next occasion to pick up the train of thought or the line of argument on which he had been engaged. Another principle of his was to abandon writing when ideas or words did not come quickly, and take a walk in the fresh air. With him, who was rarely at a loss for either ideas or words, a difficulty in find-

ing one or the other was a sign of brain fatigue, and the refreshment of open-air exercise restored his mental activity.

The interview with Dr. Hoskin on June 25th, 1892, was followed up very soon.

> June 29. Took the final step. Saw Dr. Reeve and got him to make a careful examination of my eyes with a view to a report. Wrote out my resignation of the presidency, and placed it in the hands of my good friend Dr. Hoskin, who undertakes to negotiate the whole matter with the Attorney General.

But the resignation was never presented. The above entry in his journal is the last in Wilson's hand. From subsequent notes made by his daughter it appears that he took to his bed within a day or two, and his condition soon became premonitory of the end. On July 27th, after a period of unconsciousness that had lasted many days, he recovered possession of his faculties, spoke to his daughter, asked if he were dying, and specified the friends whom he wished to be pallbearers at his funeral. He also gave directions about the as yet uncorrected proofs of his *Lost Atlantis* and added "Tell Mr. Douglas to be sure to make an Index". He also gave directions for the inscription to be put upon the monument in his family plot in the cemetery. On August 5th he was up in his chair for an hour, but weak and wandering.

His last audible words that evening were to the nurse: "He will never leave me nor forsake me." He was asleep and unconscious all the next day, August 6th, and passed away late in the afternoon.*

Thus came to a close Wilson's laborious life, just as he would have wished, fully occupied to the very end, and yet with no task left half finished. In his long career he had made his mark in many diverse fields, first as an engraver, then as archaeologist, author, and lastly administrator. In his activity and success in such varied walks of life he was typical of his race; Scotsmen more than others seem to cultivate versatility. By men of such all-round accomplishment the highest place in any department is rarely attainable, but the success in many directions which they do achieve is often more remarkable than the greater but narrower success which they miss. Reviewing Wilson's career we cannot but recognize that what he so admirably accomplished was limited by the very diversity of his gifts. His early success as an archaeologist might have been followed up had he remained in Scotland, and he might have attained a still higher place in the history of the science. Both as teacher and as writer on historical and literary

* A touching incident is recorded by Miss Wilson: "McKim [the old Bedel, a faithful servant of the University for many years] came daily; 'Any hour of the day or night, now and *always* call upon me if I can do anything for you'. He passed suddenly into a better world only an hour after my dear father."

subjects he undoubtedly achieved a certain distinction, though none of his books on literary topics stand in the first rank. His scholarship was not remarkable, but it was adequate for the purposes of his Chair. His lectures were always well thought out, well prepared and delivered, and often, on a period which appealed to his sympathies, very inspiring. When he came to Canada and embarked upon an educational career he took pains to identify himself with all the intellectual interests of his adopted country, and his obedience to his idea of civic duty, together with his gifts as a speaker, gave him that prominent position which he came to occupy in all matters of public welfare, so that not only educational circles, but religious movements, charitable and philanthropic efforts, even municipal functions, found in him a ready collaborator. Politics was the one aspect of citizenship and public activity in which he took no part and for which he manifested no sympathy. His position, first as professor, then as president, in the provincial University would have prevented any active participation in political life, but there is no sign in his journal or in any of his remembered utterances that he regarded this as a deprivation; on the contrary his distaste for politics and politicians was pronounced, and perhaps led him to assume too severe a critical attitude towards his fellow-

workers, such as the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, who were influenced by political considerations as well as the interests of the University. Those who had the privilege of knowing him in his private life remember chiefly his warmth of heart, his overflowing humour and geniality, and his old-fashioned gallantry and politeness. The age and the *milieu* which produced him have passed away, and different qualities and characteristics are required by new conditions. But Wilson was a great figure in his day and generation, and has left his impress upon the university which he served with such fidelity and energy.

# INDEX OF NAMES


Aberdeen, University of, 46, 69, 91.

Adelaide, capital of South Australia, 15.

Albany, capital of the State of New York, 55.

Aldworth, Tennyson's house in Sussex, 215, 217.

Alexander, William J., professor in University College, Toronto, 166.

Alnwick Castle, in Northumberland, 48.

Arnold, Edward Vernon, 1857-1926, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, afterwards professor in University College of North Wales, 100.

Arthur's Seat, hill overlooking Edinburgh on the east, 109.

*Athenaeum*, English review, 43, 64.

Aytoun, William Edmondstone, 1813-65, professor in Edinburgh University, 50.

Baker, Alfred, professor in the University of Toronto, 174, 179.

Baldwin, James Mark, professor in The University of Toronto, afterwards professor in Princeton University, 165, 167, 168.

Baldwin, Robert, 1804-58, prime minister of Canada, 63.

Ballantine, James, 1808-77, Scottish artist and writer, 193.

*Banner*, weekly Presbyterian newspaper published in Toronto, 194.

Bannockburn, battle of, 93.

Barnum, Phineas Taylor, American showman, 94.

Barrett, William, 1733-89, antiquary and friend of Chatterton, 192.

Beavan, James, 1801-75, professor in University College, Toronto, 61, 64, 65, 66, 72, 98.

Bennett, John Hughes, 1812-75, professor in Edinburgh University, 18.

Birkenhead, town in Cheshire opposite to Liverpool, 49.

Blackdown, moorland hill in Sussex near Haslemere, 215.

Blackie and Son, firm of publishers in Edinburgh, 97.

Blackie, John Stuart, 1809-95, professor in Edinburgh University, 18, 198, 199, 213, 216.

*Blackwood's Magazine*, 199, 200.

Blaine, James Gillespie, 1830-93, American politician, 219.

Blake, Edward (see note on p. 82), 82, 83, 84, 122, 127, 142, 157, 158, 166, 167, 168, 175, 184, 220, 226, 234.

Blake, Samuel Hume, 1835-1914, Vice-Chancellor of Ontario 1872-81, 143, 184, 185.

Body, Charles William Edmund, 1851-1912, Provost of Trinity College, Toronto, 1881-94, 127, 141.

Bond, William Bennett, 1815-1906, of Montreal, Archdeacon and subsequently Bishop, 186.

Boston, capital of the State of Massachusetts, 32.

Boyd, Sir John Alexander, 1837-1916, Chancellor of Ontario, 182.

Boydell, John, 1719-1804, English engraver and publisher, 24.

Boye, Martin Hans, 1812-1909, professor in the University of Pennsylvania, 53.

Bradley, George Granville, 1821-1903, Dean of Westminster, 217.

British Institution, London, 27.

British Museum, London, 30, 37.

*British Quarterly Review*, 22.

Brockville, town in the Province of Ontario, 161.

Brown, George (see note on p. 194), 16, 194.

Brown, John, 1810-82, Scottish writer, 13.

Browning, Robert, 1812-89, English poet, 195, 202.

Bruce, Robert de, 1274-1329, king of Scotland, 94.

Buckland, George, died 1885, professor in University College, Toronto, 64.

Burnham, George Herbert, of Toronto, medical practitioner, 227.

Burton, John Hill, 1809-81, Scottish historian, 109.

Burwash, Nathaniel, (see note on p. 119), 119, 124, 127, 141.

Calton Hill, Edinburgh, 16.

Cambridge University, 61, 103, 154, 180.

Camden Town, suburb of London, 37.

Cameron (Mrs. Alexander), of Toronto, 180.

Cameron, John, 1843-1908, editor of the *Globe* newspaper, Toronto, 1882-90, 205, 206.

Campbell, Archibald Hamilton, of Peterborough, afterwards of Toronto, 184, 185.

Canadian Institute, scientific society in Toronto, 73.

*Canadian Journal*, publication of the Canadian Institute, 73, 74.

Carlyle, Thomas, 1795-1881, Scottish writer, 38, 216.

Carnegie, Andrew, 1835-1919, ironmaster, of Pittsburg, 180.

Castle, John Harvard, 1830-90, Principal of McMaster College, Toronto, 141.

Caven, William, 1830-1904, Principal of Knox College, Toronto, 127, 129, 135, 142, 165.
*Chambers' Information for the People,* 39.
*Chambers' Edinburgh Journal,* 37, 39.
Chapman, Edward J., 1821-1904, professor in University College, Toronto, later in the University of Toronto, 64, 65, 72, 73, 97.
Chatterton, Thomas, 1752-70, English poet, 74, 159, 189, 192.
Cherriman, John Bradford, died 1907, professor in University College, Toronto, 61, 64, 72, 105.
*Christian Guardian*, Methodist church newspaper published in Toronto, 79.
Church Association, 184, 185.
Claude Gelée, *called* Claude Lorrain, 1600-82, French painter, 27, 28, 30, 31, 34.
Cobourg, town in the province of Ontario, 70, 128, 129, 132.
Cockburn, George Ralph Richardson, (see note on p. 113) 113.
Copenhagen, 187.
Cornell University, at Ithaca in the State of New York, 112, 159, 160, 167.
Cornwall, town in the province of Ontario, 189.
Cowdenknowes, house in Roxburghshire on the river Tweed near Melrose, 205.
Croft, Henry Holmes, 1820-83, professor in University College, Toronto, 64, 72, 97, 98.
Crooks, Adam (see footnote on p. 83), 83, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 112, 149.
Cumberland, Frederic William, 1821-81, of Toronto, architect, 76.
Dance, George, 1741-1825, English architect, 19.
Darwin, Charles, 1809-82, English naturalist and writer, 89.
Dawson, Aeneas McDonell, 1810-94, Roman Catholic priest at Dunfermline and later in Canada, archaeologist, 95.
Dawson, *Sir* William, 1820-99, Principal of McGill University, Montreal, 176.
Day, George Edward, 1815-72, professor in St. Andrew's University, 18.
Dewar, Alexander, Canadian farmer to whom the Quigrich had passed by descent, 94.
Dewar, Archibald, son of Alexander Dewar, 94.
Dewart, Edward Hartley, 1828-1903, Methodist divine, editor of the *Christian Guardian* newspaper, 136.
Dick, David B., of Toronto, architect, 182.
Dickinson, Lowes, 1819-1908, English painter, 217, 219.
Don river, flowing into Lake Ontario just east of Toronto, 68.

Douglas, David, of Edinburgh, publisher, 198, 231.
Draper, William Henry (see note on p. 51), 51, 184, 185, 193.
Drummond, James, 1816-77, Scottish painter, 193.
Dublin, 59.
Dunfermline, town in Scotland, 95.
Dunlop (Mrs.), of Toronto, Wilson's landlady, 62.
Edinburgh, 12, 16, 17, 36, 37, 43, 44, 45, 50, 58, 73, 75, 76, 101, 113, 194, 200, 201, 203, 208, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216.
Edinburgh High School, 16, 58, 164.
Edinburgh University, 14, 17, 18, 47, 50, 198, 199.
Edinburgh Zetalethic, college debating society, 18.
Ellis, William Hodgson, 1845-1920, lecturer in the School of Practical Science, Toronto, afterwards professor and dean of the Faculty of Applied Science in the University of Toronto, 99.
Elm Cottage, Wilson's house in Edinburgh, 49, 101.
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 1803-82, American writer, 216.
*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 97.
Eton College, 112.
Eugénie, Empress, 219.
Euston Square, London, 36.
Evangelical Alliance, 89.
Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh, 45, 193.
Falconbridge, *Sir* William Glenholme, 1846-1920, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas Division of the High Court of Justice of Ontario, 182.
Fillan, St., died about 777, Irish missionary in Scotland, 93, 94, 95.
Finsbury Square, London, 24.
Forbes, Edward, 1815-54, professor in Edinburgh University, 18.
Forneri, James, 1789-1869, professor in University College, Toronto, 61, 64, 65, 72.
Fraser, Christopher Findlay, 1839-94, of Brockville, member of the provincial administration of Sir Oliver Mowat, 161.
*Gentleman's Magazine*, 43.
Gibson, *Sir* John Morison, (see note on p. 139) 139, 166, 167.
Gilbert, Joseph Francis, 1792-1855, English painter, 19.
Giles, James, 1801-70, English painter, 31, 32.
Gladstone, William Ewart, 1809-98, English statesman and writer, 200, 226.
Glasgow, 36, 58.

*Globe*, newspaper published in Toronto, 96, 121, 130, 168, 169, 171, 172, 194, 205.

Goodsir, John, 1814-67, professor in Edinburgh University, 18.

Graham, Thomas, 1805-69, professor in University College, London, 36.

Grant, George Monro, 1835-1902, Principal of Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, 85, 119, 165.

Grasett, Henry James, 1808-82, Dean of the Cathedral of St. James, Toronto, 155, 184, 185.

Grey, *Sir* George, 1799-1882, Home Secretary in the administration of Lord Palmerston, 51.

Gzowski, *Sir* Casimir Stanislaus, 1813-99, of Toronto, 158, 179, 182, 184.

Hamilton, town in the province of Ontario, 115, 139, 166.

Hardy, Arthur Sturgis, 1837-1901, prime minister of Ontario 1896-99, 112, 139, 143.

Harvey, *Sir* George, 1806-76, Scottish painter, 51, 191, 193.

Hawarden Castle, England, the country residence of Gladstone, 200.

Head, *Sir* Edmund Walker, 1805-68, Governor-in-chief of Canada 1854-61, 76, 219.

Hellmuth, Isaac, 1817-1901, of London, Ontario, bishop, 88.

Higham, Thomas, 1795-1844, English engraver, 20.

Hill, Alexander Staveley, 1825-1905, Deputy High Steward of Oxford University, 221.

Hincks, William, 1794-1871, professor in University College, Toronto, 64, 65, 72.

Hincks (Mrs.), wife of Professor Hincks, 58.

Hind, Henry Youle, 1823-1908, professor in Trinity College, Toronto, 73.

Hirschfelder, Jacob M., 1819-1902, lecturer in University College, Toronto, 65, 160, 161.

Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 1809-94, American writer, 21.

Horn, Robert, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh, 193.

Hoskin, John, 1836-1921, of Toronto, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the University of Toronto, 227, 231.

Howland, William Holmes, (see note on p. 128) 128.

Hume, David, 1711-76, Scottish philosopher and writer, 89.

Hume, James Gibson, professor in University College, Toronto, 165, 167, 168.

Hutton, Maurice, professor in University College, Toronto, afterwards Principal, 153.

Huxley, Thomas Henry, 1825-95, English writer, 89.
Ithaca, town in the State of New York, 112.
Juvenile Society for the Advancement of Knowledge, 17.
Kane, Paul, 1810-71, Canadian painter, 73.
Keith, *Sir* Arthur, Hunterian professor, Royal College of Surgeons of England, 46.
Kerr, James Kirkpatrick, 1841-1916, of Toronto, Speaker of the Canadian Senate, 143.
Keys, David R., lecturer and afterwards professor in University College, Toronto, 159.
King's College, University of, the original name of the University of Toronto, 59, 69, 70, 76, 78, 97.
Kingston, town in the province of Ontario, 69, 70, 85, 110.
Knox College, Presbyterian theological college in Toronto, 127, 128, 142, 160, 167, 177, 179.
Knutsford, *Viscount,* Secretary of State for the Colonies in the administration of Lord Salisbury, 211.
Laing, David, 1793-1878, Scottish antiquary, 193.
Langton, John, 1808-94, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Toronto 1856-61, 68, 76, 78, 79.
Lansdowne, *Marquis of,* 1845-1927, Governor-General of Canada 1883-88, 210, 211.
Laurier, *Sir* Wilfrid, 1841-1919, Prime Minister of Canada, 84, 106, 112.
Lecky, William Edward Hartpole, 1838-1903, Irish historian, 217.
Leitch, William, 1814-64, Principal of Queen's University, Kingston, 79.
Literary and Athletic Society, student society in the University of Toronto, 67.
Literary and Scientific Society, student society in University College, Toronto, 67, 169.
Liverpool, 52, 66.
Logan, *Sir* William Edmund, 1798-1875, Director of the Geological Survey of Canada, 51.
London, 19, 22, 23, 35, 36, 37, 82, 203, 216.
London, town in the province of Ontario, 88.
London Religious Tract Society, 41, 42.
London, University of, 71.
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, 1807-82, American poet, 73, 216.

Lorne, *Marquis of*, afterwards ninth Duke of Argyll, 1845-1914, Governor-General of Canada 1878-83, 109, 157.
Loudon, James (see note on p. 105), 105, 124, 127, 129, 135, 153.
Lowell, James Russell, 1819-91, American writer, 219.
Macallum, Archibald Byron, professor in the University of Toronto, afterwards in McGill University, 220.
McAuliffe, Jeremiah, 188.
McCaul, John, (see footnote on p. 59) 58, 59, 60, 64, 67, 72, 78, 87, 97, 98, 100, 105.
McCurdy, James Frederick, professor in University College, Toronto, 161, 162.
Macdonald, John, 1824-90, of Toronto, member of the Canadian Senate, 222.
Macdonald, *Sir* John Alexander, 1815-91, Prime Minister of Canada, 180, 209, 210, 212, 215.
Mackenzie, Alexander, 1822-92, Prime Minister of Canada, 82.
McKim, Robert, bedel of the University of Toronto, 170, 232.
Maclise, Daniel, 1806-70, Irish painter, 19.
McMaster College, Baptist theological college in Toronto, 127, 128, 141.
MacMurchy, Archibald, 1832-1912, of Toronto, educationist, 92.
Macready, William Charles, 1793-1873, English actor, 22, 43.
*Maga*, students' periodical published in Edinburgh, 17.
*Mail*, newspaper published in Toronto, 168.
Mary of Gueldres, died 1463, queen of James II of Scotland, 193.
Masson, David, 1822-1907, professor in Edinburgh University, 51, 213.
Maurice, Frederick Denison, 1805-72, English divine and writer, 15.
Maxwell, James Clerk, 1831-79, professor in Cambridge University, 154.
Melrose, town in Roxburghshire, 205.
Meredith, *Sir* William Ralph, 1840-1923, Chief Justice of Ontario, Chancellor of the University of Toronto 1900-23, 106, 143.
*Methodist Magazine*, 19, 32.
Michie, James, of Toronto, 107.
Mill, John Stuart, 1806-73, English writer, 89.
Miller, William, 1796-1882, Anglo-Scottish engraver, 18, 20, 21, 23, 27, 28, 34.
Mimico, town in the province of Ontario, 128.
Moffat (*Colonel*), of Toronto, 128.
Montreal, 89, 185.
Moon, *Sir* Francis Graham, 1796-1871, art publisher in London, 23, 26, 35.
Morgan, Henry James, 1842-1913, Canadian writer, 39.

Morrison, Joseph Curran, 1816-85, judge of the High Court of Justice of Ontario, Chancellor of the University of Toronto 1860-76, 51, 107.
Moscow, 61, 65.
Moss, Thomas, (see note on p. 98) 98, 106.
Mowat, *Sir* Oliver, (see note on p. 84) 51, 83, 84, 85, 86, 91, 93, 102, 105, 111, 112, 114, 120, 123, 125, 130, 131, 134, 135, 139, 140, 143, 144, 157, 158, 161, 162, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 173, 175, 176, 179, 210, 211, 220, 231.
Muir, *Sir* William, 1819-1905, Principal of Edinburgh University, 176.
Mulock, *Sir* William, (see note on p. 106) 106, 107, 111, 118, 119, 122, 123, 124, 127, 129, 139, 141, 148, 157, 158, 167, 168, 180, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 234.
Napoleon I, Emperor of the French, 61.
Napoleon III, Emperor of the French, 219.
Naseby, battle of, 41.
National Gallery, London, 19, 27, 28.
National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, 213, 214.
Nelles, Samuel Sobieski, (see note on p. 120) 119, 120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 127, 130, 136.
Nelson (Mrs.), widow of Thomas Nelson, 193.
Nelson( Mrs.), widow of William Nelson, 206, 207.
Nelson (Mrs.), Julia, of New York, 200.
Nelson, Robert, 1794-1873, of Montreal, leader in the Canadian insurrection of 1837-8, 201.
Nelson, Thomas, of Edinburgh, publisher, 207, 213.
Nelson, Thomas, and Sons, firm of publishers in Edinburgh, 37, 38, 40, 43, 97.
Nelson, William, 1816-87, of Edinburgh, publisher, 37, 110, 194, 199, 204, 205, 206, 207.
Nelson, Wolfred, 1792-1863, of Montreal, leader in the Canadian insurrection of 1837-8, 201.
*Nelson's British Library*, 39.
Nesbitt, William Beattie, Canadian politician, 174.
*News*, newspaper published in Toronto, 115.
Newsboys' Home, Toronto, 189, 190, 195.
New York, 55, 194, 200.
Niagara, 57.

Nicholson, Henry Alleyne, 1844-99, professor in University College, Toronto, and afterwards in St. Andrews and Aberdeen universities, 91.
Normal School, Toronto, 171, 172.
Northumberland, *Duke of*, 48.
Oban, town in Scotland, 198.
Oneida, town in the State of New York, 55.
Ontario, Lake, 64.
Ottawa, 82, 84, 157, 216, 224.
Oxford University, 61, 102, 103, 112, 153, 180, 217.
Pardee, Timothy Blair, died 1889, member of the provincial administration of Sir Oliver Mowat, 143.
Paton, *Sir* Noel, 1821-1901, Scottish painter, 213.
Pearman, William Davies, Classical tutor in University College, Toronto, 153.
Pennsylvania, University of, at Philadelphia, 54.
Peterborough, town in the province of Ontario, 185.
Pharmacy, College of, at Toronto, 172.
Phelps, Edward John, 1822-1900, Minister of the United States to England, 219.
Philadelphia, 52, 53, 55.
Philadelphia, Academy of Natural Science of, 54.
Philadelphia, Historical Society of, 54.
Pike, William Herbert, 1851-1921, professor in University College, Toronto, and afterwards in the University of Toronto, 163, 189.
Pittsburg, town in the State of Pennsylvania, 180.
Playfair, *Sir* Lyon, afterwards *Baron*, 1818-98, professor in Edinburgh University, 18.
Potts, John, 1838-1907, Canadian Methodist divine, 136.
Prince (*Captain*), governor of the Toronto gaol, 187.
Princeton University, at Princeton in the State of New Jersey, 161, 165, 168.
Proudfoot, William, 1823-1903, judge of the High Court of Justice of Ontario, professor in the University of Toronto, 181.
*Punch*, 24.
Pye, John, 1782-1874, English engraver, 27.
Quebec, 66, 89.
Queen's College, University of, at Kingston, Ontario, 85, 119, 122, 126, 128, 131, 136, 147, 148, 165.
Quigrich, the crozier of St. Fillan, 93, 94, 95, 193.

Ramsay, *Sir* Andrew Crombie, 1814-91, Director-General of the Geological Survey for England and Wales, 18.
Reading, town in Berkshire, England, 112.
Reeve, Richard A., 1842-1919, Dean of the Medical Faculty of the University of Toronto, 227, 231.
Reid, *Sir* George, 1841-1913, Scottish painter, 121, 213.
Religious Tract Society, of London, 41, 42.
Robert the Bruce, 1274-1329, king of Scotland, 94.
Robinson, John Beverley, 1821-96, Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario 1880-87, 161.
Rochester, town in the State of New York, 55, 56.
Rogers, Samuel, 1763-1855, English poet, 20.
Rosebery, *Earl of*, 1847-1929, Foreign Secretary in Gladstone's administration, later prime minister, 109, 226.
Ross, *Sir* George William (see note on p. 112), 112, 114, 115, 116, 123, 125, 127, 128, 129, 130, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 144, 153, 157, 161, 162, 163, 166, 167, 168, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 220, 222.
Royal Society of Canada, 95, 157, 200, 203.
Ruskin, John, 1819-1900, English writer, 22, 27, 34.
Russel, Alexander, 1814-76, editor of the *Scotsman*, 42.
Russell, Alexander, Dean of the Cathedral of Adelaide, South Australia, cousin of Daniel Wilson, 15.
Russell, Catharine, cousin of Daniel Wilson, 49.
Russell, James, cousin of Daniel Wilson, 15, 49.
Russell, John, cousin of Daniel Wilson, 16.
Ryerson, Egerton, (see note on p. 79) 79, 84, 85, 86, 92, 113, 135.
Ryerson, George Sterling, of Toronto, medical practitioner, 227.
St. Andrews University, 18, 47, 60, 69.
St. James' Cathedral, Toronto, 58, 155, 156, 185, 186.
St. Lawrence Hall, Toronto, 58.
St. Lawrence river, 66.
St. Margaret's Chapel, Edinburgh, 214.
St. Michael's College, Roman Catholic College in Toronto, 122, 127, 128, 148, 151.
St. Paul's Cathedral, London, 26.
Salisbury, *Marquis of*, 1830-1903, Prime Minister of England, 215.
School of Practical Science, Toronto, 109, 132, 135, 136, 177, 178, 179.

Schurman, James, professor in and afterwards president of Cornell University, 157, 159, 160.
*Scotsman*, newspaper published in Edinburgh, 39, 42, 75, 203.
Scott, David, 1806-49, Scottish painter, 203.
Scott, Robert, 1777-1841, Scottish engraver, 203.
Scott, *Sir* Walter, 16, 20, 216.
Scott, William Bell, 1811-90, Scottish painter and poet, 203.
Sebastopol, town in the Crimea, 170.
Sedan, battle of, 219.
Shakespeare, William, 41, 74, 159.
Sheraton, James Patterson, 1841-1906, Principal of Wycliffe College, Toronto, 127, 129, 135, 141, 142, 165.
Simcoe, Lake, in Ontario, 64.
Sime (Mrs.), wife of James Sime, sister of Daniel Wilson, 14, 18, 85.
Sime, James, 1843-95, English writer, 15, 51, 85.
Simpson, *Sir* James Young, 1811-70, professor in Edinburgh University, 50.
Simpson, W. Douglas, librarian of Aberdeen University, 46.
Skene, William Forbes, 1809-92, Scottish historian, 110.
Smith, Goldwin, 1823-1910, English writer, 112, 180, 202, 216, 217.
Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 38, 45, 93, 214.
Stanley, Arthur Penrhyn, 1815-1881, Dean of Westminster, 217.
Stanley, *Lord*, afterwards sixteenth Earl of Derby, 1841-1908, Governor-General of Canada 1888-93, 212.
Steell, *Sir* John, 1804-91, Scottish sculptor, 201.
Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 1811-96, American writer, 40.
Strachan, John, (see note on p. 69) 59, 69, 97.
Stratford-le-Bow, suburb of London, 35.
Stratford-on-Avon, town in England, birthplace of Shakespeare, 41.
Stuart, Charles Allan, 1865-1926, judge of the Supreme Court of Alberta, 221.
Stuart, John, 1813-77, Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 93, 94, 193.
Superior, Lake, 47, 74.
*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 39.
Taylor, *Sir* Thomas Wardlaw, 1833-1917, Chief Justice of Manitoba, 107.
Tecumseh, Canadian Indian, killed in the War of 1812, 92, 93.
Temple, J. Algernon, of Toronto, medical practitioner, 155.
Tennyson, Alfred, *Lord*, 1809-92, English poet, 202, 215, 216, 217, 218.

Tennyson, Hallam, *Lord,* son of Alfred Tennyson, 216, 217.
Tennyson (*Lady*), wife of Alfred Tennyson, 215, 217.
Thorvaldsen, Oertel, 1770-1844, Danish sculptor, 187.
Toronto, 11, 49, 50, 51, 56, 57, 58, 62, 68, 69, 75, 82, 85, 95, 102, 105, 112, 113, 123, 128, 132, 150, 185, 194, 200, 219.
Toronto, University of, 11, 51, 70, 71, 75, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 90, 98, 104, 105, 106 108, 109, 110, 118, 128, 132, 134, 136, 137, 139, 145, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 162, 172, 173, 184, 212, 213, 220, 224, 225, 226, 227, 232, 233, 234.
Trafalgar Square, London, 26.
Trinity College, Cambridge, 100.
Trinity College, Dublin, 59, 60, 180.
Trinity College, University of, at Toronto, 69, 70, 78, 98, 122, 127, 128, 131, 134, 136, 141, 147, 148, 151, 172, 184.
Turner, Joseph Mallord William, 1775-1851, English painter, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36.
Universal Brotherhood of Friends of Truth, student society at Edinburgh University, 17.
University College, London, 36.
University College, Oxford, 112.
University College, Toronto, 11, 38, 48, 50, 58, 59, 62, 71, 72, 76, 77, 78, 79, 81, 87, 97, 98, 100, 101, 103, 104, 105, 110, 112, 115, 116, 120, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 131, 132, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 143, 145, 149, 153, 155, 164, 170, 173, 176, 178, 183, 184, 196, 205, 220, 225, 226.
*University Monthly,* published in Toronto, 124.
Upper Canada College, at Toronto, 58, 59, 113, 135, 178.
VanderSmissen, William Henry, 1844-1928, professor in University College, Toronto, 124.
Veterinary College, at Toronto, 172.
Victoria College and University, at Cobourg and afterwards at Toronto, 79, 119, 120, 122, 123, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 136, 137, 138, 139, 141, 144, 147, 148, 150.
Vines, Frederick Austin, Classical tutor in University College, Toronto, 153.
Walker, *Sir* Edmund, 1848-1924, Canadian banker, Chancellor of the University of Toronto 1923-24, 106.
Wallace, Alfred Russell, 1823-1913, English naturalist, 196.
Wallace, William Stewart, librarian of the University of Toronto, 124.

Wallis, Robert, 1794-1878, English engraver, 29.
Ward, Artemus, *nom de plume* of Charles Farrar Browne, 1834-67, American writer, 202.
Waters, Frank, 189.
White, Andrew D., 1832-1918, President of Cornell University, 160.
White Mountains of New Hampshire, 108, 168.
Whitman, Walt, 1819-92, American poet, 73.
Wilson, Archibald, father of Daniel Wilson, 12, 14.
Wilson, Daniel
birth and parentage, 12, 13.
attends Edinburgh High School, 16.
exploring and sketching old Edinburgh his holiday amusement, 16, 17.
membership in school and college societies, 17, 18.
student at Edinburgh University, 17, 18.
begins to learn the art of engraving, 18.
goes to London to practise it, 22.
introduced to Moon, 23.
and to Turner, 25.
engraves Turner's "Ancient Carthage", 27 *et seq.*
employed in writing also, 36.
marriage, 36.
settles in London to literary work, 37.
returns to Edinburgh, 37.
elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 38.
early writings—
(1) History of Oliver Cromwell, 38.
(2) History of the Puritans, 38.
(3) Other "pot-boilers", 39-41.
(4) Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time, 12, 17, 41, 43, 44, 180.
(5) Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland, 41, 45, 46, 47, 54.
(6) Old Edinburgh, 41.
(7) Modern Edinburgh, 41.
(8) Spring Wild Flowers, 42, 74.
applies for librarianship of the Faculty of Advocates, 45.
receives honorary LL.D. degree from St. Andrews University, 47.
growing fame as an archaeologist, 48.

Wilson, Daniel (continued)
occupies Elm Cottage, 49.
accepts professorship in University College, Toronto, 50.
sails from Liverpool to Philadelphia, 52.
incidents of his stay in Philadelphia, 52-55.
experience of a railway accident, 55, 56.
arrives in Toronto, 57.
impressions of Toronto, 57, 61, 62.
and of his colleagues and students, 59-67.
is joined by his wife and daughters, 68.
takes a house in Yorkville, 68.
member of the Canadian Institute, 73.
edits and contributes to the *Canadian Journal*, 73.
literary works of his middle period—
(1) Prehistoric Man, 47, 73, 74.
(2) Chatterton, a biographical study, 74.
(3) Caliban, or the missing link, 74.
(4) Reminiscences of old Edinburgh, 75, 192, 193.
(5) Minor undertakings, 97.
interested in the design of the new University College building, 76, 77.
champions University College before the Legislative Committee, 78-80.
applies for the Chair of English in Edinburgh University, 51.
refuses offer of the portfolio of Education in the Ontario government, 86.
refuses offer of principalship of a new university projected for London, Ontario, 88-90.
takes part in extra-mural lectures to women, 91.
reports on the alleged grave of Tecumeh, 92, 93.
secures the Quigrich for the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 93-95.
contributes leaders to the *Globe*, 96.
death of his elder daughter, 97, 192.
succeeds McCaul as President of University College, 101-103.
unsuccessful as a candidate for the Vice-Chancellorship of the University of Toronto, 107.
occupies a new house on St. George Street, 108.
makes the White Mountains his usual holiday resort, 108.
facility in sketching, 108.
inaugurates evening lectures in the School of Practical Science, 109.
recommended for post of Historiographer Royal of Scotland, 109, 110.

Wilson, Daniel (continued)
deals with the question of the admission of women to lectures in University College, 110-117.
his irascibility and self-control, 120, 121.
takes part in discussions on University Federation, 122-135.
offers to resign, 131.
assists in framing the University Federation Act of 1887, 136-140.
passage of the University Federation Act, 142-144.
relieved of the subject English, 159.
has difficulties in securing suitable appointments in the University and College, 154.
for History, 156-158.
for Oriental Languages, 160-162.
for Philosophy, 165-168.
deals with unruly students, 169-172.
opposes abolition of the College Residence, 173-176.
University College building destroyed by fire, 177.
reconstruction negotiations, 181-183.
his religious sympathies and activities, 184-187.
philanthropic interests, 187, 189, 190.
private generosity, 188, 189.
sense of humour, 190, 191.
death of Mrs. Wilson, 195.
his correspondence, 195-202.
literary sympathies, 202, 203.
habits of literary composition, 230.
last books—
(1) The Right Hand: Lefthandednesss, 203, 230.
(2) Memoir of William Nelson, 206, 207.
(3) The Lost Atlantis, and other Ethnographic Studies, 200, 204, 229, 230, 231.
writes his lectures anew, 207, 208.
knighted, 208-212.
portrait painted by Sir George Reid, 213, 214.
is presented with the freedom of the City of Edinburgh, 214.
visits Tennyson, 215-219.
holds his last Convocation, 219.
appoints substitute to deliver lectures, 221.

Wilson, Daniel (continued)
discussions about the Park Hospital lease, 222-224.
failing eyesight, 227-229.
decides to resign, 231.
last illness, 231.
and death, 232.
Wilson, George, 1818-59, professor in Edinburgh University, brother of Daniel Wilson, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 35, 36, 49, 113.
Wilson, Jane Sybil, daughter of Daniel Wilson, 129, 217, 220, 232.
Wilson, Janet (*née* Aitken), mother of Daniel Wilson, 13, 15, 49.
Wilson, Jessie Eleanor, daughter of Daniel Wilson, 193.
Wilson, John (Christopher North), 1785-1854, Scottish writer, 200, 201, 202.
Wilson, Margaret (*née* Mackay), wife of Daniel Wilson, 36, 52, 68, 101, 107, 129, 156, 195.
Wilson, Peter, uncle of Daniel Wilson, 12, 49.
Wordsworth, William, 1770-1850, English poet, 219.
*World*, newspaper published in Toronto, 115.
Worsaae, Jens Jacob Asmussen, 1821-85, Danish antiquary, 46.
Wycliffe College, Anglican theological college at Toronto, 127, 128, 142, 143, 160, 167, 177, 179, 185, 222, 223.
York, the original name of Toronto, 69.
Yorkville, suburb of Toronto, 65, 68.
Young, George Paxton, 1819-89, professor in University College, Toronto, 16, 162, 164, 165, 166, 167.

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